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TO EVOLUTION



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A QUESTION OF  
GAIN OR LOSS

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TO MY WIFE  
PERSIS ISABEL JOHNSON



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## CHAPTER I

### MY PURPOSE

In this book I neither oppose nor advocate the doctrine of evolution. I am concerned only to estimate its value to the Christian who holds it. What does it contribute to his mental satisfaction, to his adoration of God, and to the forces which he employs in his warfare against sin in himself and in the world? When cast into the scales of our accustomed Christian beliefs, how much does it disturb them? How much ought it to disturb them? Is it the duty of the Christian evolutionist to redress their poise and balance? If the doctrine enriches him at one point, does it impoverish him at others? If it imperils his cherished convictions or his activity in the service of God and man, how shall he escape this danger? It is such questions as these that I consider. I do not answer any of them fully, and I shall accomplish my desire if I shall aid my readers to carry the discussion further in their own meditations.

I take up Darwinism in certain of its aspects because it is intimately associated with the doc-

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trine of evolution. It is not absolutely necessary to the doctrine of evolution, yet it has aided the great majority of scientific men to welcome that doctrine. I observe that many of them to-day are inclined to reject it, though they are still evolutionists. Having found it a useful bridge to carry them over to the doctrine of evolution, they are now disposed to break it down as misleading. Thus Drummond \* writes:

The attacks on the Darwinian theory from the outside were never so keen as are the controversies now raging in scientific circles over the fundamental principles of Darwinism itself. On at least two main points—sexual selection and the origin of the higher mental characteristics of man—Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverer with Darwin of the principle of natural selection though he be, directly opposes his colleague. The powerful attack of Weismann on the Darwinian assumption of the inheritability of acquired characters has opened one of the liveliest controversies of recent years, and the whole field of science is hot with controversies and discussions. In his “germ-plasm” the German naturalist believes himself to have finally disposed of both Darwin’s “gemmules” and Herbert Spencer’s “primordial units,” while Eimer breaks a lance with Weismann in defence of Darwin, and Herbert Spencer replies for himself, assuring us that “either there has been inheritance of acquired characters or there has been no evolution.”

The Christian thinker who is not technically versed in biology may well hold his mind in sus-

\* The Ascent of Man, p. 5.



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pense concerning Darwinism till the professional students of science have settled these differences. It presents to us great ethical difficulties, as we shall see. But we can accept it with little intellectual difficulty, if it shall prove to be true, for it will require us only to take a new and by no means impossible view of a few phrases of Genesis, of Romans, and of First Corinthians. But it would be folly to commit ourselves to it until it is more firmly established in the confidence of scientific men.

The theory of evolution, however, is accepted generally by the students of the physical sciences, and is entering rapidly into the entire field of Christian teaching. The intelligent Christian is inclined to accept it on the testimony of these students. Intelligent Christians must at least consider it, whether willingly or unwillingly, and many of them are not only willing, but eager. It is their eagerness which has led me to attempt an estimate of its value in religious thought.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION

Before we proceed to estimate the religious value of the doctrine of evolution, let us seek to gain a clear conception of the doctrine itself. This is not so light a task as many persons may suppose, for the evolutionists do not agree at all points. After a careful examination of the entire field, I present the following distinctions as sufficient for our present purpose.

#### I. The untheistic doctrine of evolution.

The group of scientific men who advocate this would approve the statement of it given by Le Conte:\* “A continuous progressive change, according to certain laws, and by means of resident forces.” Or they would equally approve the statement of Huxley:† “The hypothesis of evolution supposes that in all this vast progression there would be no breach of continuity, no point at which we could say, ‘This is a natural process,’ and, ‘This is not a natural process;’

\* *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*. Le Conte was a Christian evolutionist, but this definition, as the reader perceives, is untheistic.

† *American Addresses*.

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but that the whole might be compared to that wonderful process of development which may be seen every day going on under our eyes, in virtue of which there arises, out of the semi-fluid, comparatively homogeneous substance which we call an egg, the complicated organization of one of the higher animals."

Interpreting these definitions fairly, we should find in the doctrine the following factors: 1. There is in the universe an uninterrupted progress from the lower to the higher. 2. This progress is achieved exclusively by natural forces residing in the universe. 3. These forces act continuously and in a uniform manner, without interruption or variation caused by any other agency. If we accept these three statements we shall necessarily hold that the universe is a closed system, autonomous, sufficient to itself. We shall hold that the state of the universe at any given moment is caused by its state in the preceding moment. The human race, with all its exceptional endowments and all its achievements, whether shameful or glorious, is included in this view of the universe.

The persons who hold this form of the doctrine may be separated into two classes: 1. Those who deny the existence of God, like

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Büchner and Haeckel. 2. Those who neither affirm nor deny the existence of God, but call themselves agnostics, like Huxley, and like Spencer in his earlier writings. This second class agree with the first in finding no evidence of divine interference with the course of nature, and in reading the entire history of the universe in the terms of matter and force acting in accordance with uniform law. The "Unknowable" of Spencer, to which he devotes the opening chapter of his "First Principles," does not lead him to admit divine intervention at any point of the history.

### II. The theistic doctrine of evolution.

It is not easy to frame a definition of this doctrine. The untheistic evolutionists try to define their meaning clearly; but many of the theistic shun definition and present their thought in a haze of words not favorable to clear vision. In general they agree no further than in holding that nature reveals a God of power, wisdom, and benevolence, without whose agency an ordered universe could not have come into existence. They are divided into various groups, somewhat as follows:

#### I. With reference to the supernatural.

(1) Those who believe that God works in

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nature in accordance with certain uniform laws, from which he never departs.

(2) Those who believe that, since he is "a God of order and not of confusion," since he has created our minds in the likeness of his own, and since it is best for us to live in a universe of law and order, he prefers to work in a uniform manner; but that on rare occasions, for lofty moral reasons, he produces effects which could not be produced by ordinary agencies or by his ordinary methods of action.

2. With reference to causation.

(1) Those who deny the existence of natural forces and second causes, and refer all events in the history of the universe directly to the will of God, the only force and the only cause. This group may be divided into two subordinate groups. *a* Those who deny the supernatural, and maintain that God has certain fixed habits of action, from which he never departs. *b* Those who affirm the supernatural, and tell us that what we call the laws of nature are the habits of God, to which for wise reasons he usually adheres, while supernatural events represent his exceptional departures from his ordinary habits of action, always taken for the purpose of securing some lofty moral end.

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(2) Those who acknowledge the existence of real natural forces acting as second causes. This group also is divided into two subordinate groups. *a* Those who deny the supernatural, and tell us that, while God may sustain the forces of nature, he always acts through them, and never modifies the uniformity of their procedure for any reason or in any degree. *b* Those who affirm the supernatural, and tell us that, while the forces of nature, as second causes, act in a manner so mathematically uniform as to give rise to the phrase "the laws of nature," God may turn them in this way or that in exceptional instances, or may act directly, without their mediation.

### 3. With reference to religion.

(1) Those who pause with theism and deny that Christianity had an origin especially divine. These persons also deny the supernatural. I shall not discuss this view, though in discussing other matters I shall mention some of those who hold it.

(2) Those who add Christianity to theism. These again are divided into two groups. *a* Those who deny the supernatural, and accept Christianity as the highest point yet reached in the natural development of religion. *b* Those

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who accept Christianity as a supernatural religion. Many of these persons regard all religions as supernatural, while they regard Christianity as the final and absolute religion.

Thus all Christian evolutionists are theistic evolutionists, but not all theistic evolutionists are Christian evolutionists.

The Christian evolutionists differ among themselves concerning many other questions besides those which I have now noted. A few stand fast at the conservative extreme, and hold all the usual doctrines of Christianity intact, but rechristened with the name of evolution.\* The great majority, however, retreat from this position along an extended line, some endeavoring to pause here, and others there, but all flinging away many of the weapons to which the Christian world has been accustomed, and, as they flee, seeking to use others, new and untried, or old and long ago found worthless.

It is obvious that my study can have little relation to the more conservative wing of the Christian evolutionists, who adopt evolution only as a new frame in which to set forth the accustomed features of theology, for they can neither gain nor lose much by the mere formal appropri-

\* An able representative of this group is J. W. Conley, D. D., in his book entitled "Evolution and Man Here and Hereafter."

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ation of it. Nor can I include all the less conservative in every statement which I shall make, for the conclusions which they reach concerning certain things differ widely. But I shall speak of several of the groups which I have pointed out. I shall speak also of tendencies, and shall illustrate them with quotations so ample and from sources so representative, that no one, I trust, will find fault with my exhibition of opinions. I shall endeavor to confine myself to the main currents of thought, and shall not willingly spend my time in mapping the eddies.



## CHAPTER III

### IMMANENCE

Many Christians rejoice in the doctrine of evolution because they think that it will lead to the general adoption of the doctrine that God is immanent in the universe, and will displace the doctrine of mere transcendence. The manner in which the earlier belief is presented by them may be illustrated by the following statement of Dr. Lyman Abbott: \* “The current theology is Roman in its origin. It assumes as an axiom a God apart from the universe, and ruling over it, as the Roman emperor was apart from the Roman empire and ruled over it.” But to-day we are beginning to perceive that God is immanent in nature. We have been taught the doctrine of “an absentee God;” we are beginning to accept the doctrine of a resident God.

If these statements concerning “the current theology” were true, we should owe much gratitude to the evolutionists for enabling us to bring God into the heart of nature. But they cannot be defended. The doctrine of “an absentee

\* *The Theology of an Evolutionist*, p. 4.

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God'' belongs to Gnosticism, and the Christian church rejected it with horror in the very beginning, and has continued to reject it to this day. There has never been a single dissenting voice. Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Melanchthon, and Andrew Fuller agree in the statement that God is everywhere and acts everywhere.

I was once in a class-room of a theological school when the Professor was examining a student in systematic theology. He readily drew from the student the statement that the older theologians taught the doctrine of "an absentee God," a God merely transcendent. A visitor asked the student if the older theologians taught the omnipresence of God, and received the answer that they did. He then asked the student how an omnipresent God can be "an absentee God," but he received no answer, either from the student or from the Professor who had instructed him. He then asked further how an omnipresent God can fail to be immanent, but to this question again he received no answer.

I am unable to trace to its source this recent misconception of "the current theology" and of the still older theology. But possibly, could we do so, we should find it in a careless study of the Roman Catholic schoolmen. They wished

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to distinguish between the divine act of perpetually generating the Son of God, and the divine act of creating the universe. In generating his Son, they said, the Father performs an immanent act, because the act does not pass into another substance, since the Son is of the same substance with him. But in creating the universe God performed a transcendent act, in the sense that the act passed into another substance, since the universe is not of the same substance with him. In representing the act of creation as transcendent they had no thought of putting God out of the universe; they were only guarding themselves from pantheism, which declares that God and the universe are of one and the same substance.

In fact, the schoolmen taught a doctrine of divine immanence so extreme that it perplexes some of us, though it still retains its place in our theology.\* They declared that the entire substance of God is present in every point of space.† They took this radical ground in the interest of Christian faith, which does not doubt that the infinite sum of divine power is ready in every place to do what God wills to do, and, in particular, to rescue the believing soul from its spiritual enemies.

\* Strong, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 133, 419.

† Thus Anselm in both his *Monologion* and his *Proslogion*.

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If the doctrine that God transcends the universe but is not immanent in it "is Roman in its origin," we shall find it in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, the two great Roman theologians. But in fact no other theologians have stated the doctrine of immanence so strongly as these men. It is Augustine who writes:

God is diffused through all things. He saith himself by the prophet, "I fill heaven and earth;" and it is said unto him in a certain psalm, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there;" because God is substantially diffused everywhere. God is not thus diffused through all things as though by diffusion of mass, so as to be half in one half of the world's body and half in the other, and thus entire in the whole; but entire in heaven alone, and entire in earth alone, and entire in both heaven and earth, and comprehended in no place, but everywhere entire in himself.

It is Augustine who writes:

Though he is everywhere present to the inner eye when it is sound and clear, he condescended to make himself manifest to the outward eye of those whose inward sight is weak and dim. Not then in the sense of traversing space, but because he appeared to mortal men in the form of mortal flesh, he is said to have come to us. For he came to a place where he had always been, seeing that he was in the world, and the world was made by him.

Thomas Aquinas is equally explicit:

There have been some, as the Manicheans, who said that spiritual and incorporeal things are subject to divine

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power, but visible and corporeal things are subject to the power of a contrary principle. Against these we must say that God is in all things by his power. There have been others again who, though they believed all things subject to divine power, still did not extend divine providence down to the lower parts, concerning which it is said in Job, "He walketh upon the hinges of heaven and considereth not our concerns." And against these it is necessary to say that God is in all things by his presence. There have been again others, who, though they said all things belong to the providence of God, still laid it down that not all things are created immediately by God, but that he immediately created the first, and these created others. And against them it is necessary to say that he is in all things by his essence.

Nor were these expressions exceptional gleams of light in a region of prevailing darkness. They were not the breaking forth of Christian consciousness in rare moments when faith was unusually strong. They were the steadfast teachings not only of Augustine and Aquinas, but of the entire Roman Catholic church, and there has not been a moment of its history when a denial of them would not have been pronounced heresy. The Reformers inherited this doctrine of the divine immanence, and transmitted it to us unchanged. They sometimes called it the doctrine of the divine omnipresence, and sometimes the doctrine of the divine immensity. If we call it the doctrine of the divine immanence, we have

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simply invented a new name; we have not discovered a new truth.

I conclude that the gain which many evolutionists imagine in the doctrine of the divine immanence is a singular illusion springing from their unacquaintance with the earlier thinkers of the church.

But I proceed further, and affirm that in the doctrine as they teach it they suffer loss, for they are so enamored with it and so little acquainted with its history that they push it to extremes which the earlier writers knew how to avoid, which threaten the existence of other necessary doctrines, and which present theology as a distorted and shapeless mass, no longer worthy to be called a system.

I. They teach that God is immanent in man as he is in nature. But this would destroy all individuality. King\* is almost alone among the more pronounced Christian evolutionists in his perception of the danger. "Unless," he says, "we mean entirely to deny the reality of personality and character in man, we are bound to admit that there must be some difference between God's immanence in nature and his immanence in man." But what kind of differ-

\* *Reconstruction in Theology*, p. 104.

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ence? Alas, even King does not answer the question which he presents as so urgent.

2. The same writer \* warns us that the doctrine of immanence is now pushed so far by many that religion itself is left without ground. The personality of God is obscured, and religion is the communion of the soul with a free personality. But President King might go further, and observe that religion is the communion of a free personality with a free personality, while the doctrine of immanence is often so presented that it blots out the personality not only of God, but also of man.

3. The doctrine of sin is deprived of all logical support. Let us listen once more to Dr. Lyman Abbott, † who declares his belief that God “resides in the world of nature and in the world of men: that there are no laws of nature which are not the laws of God’s own being; that there are no forces of nature; that there is only one divine, infinite force, always proceeding from, always obedient to, the will of God; that there are not occasional and exceptional theophanies, but that all nature and all life is one great theophany; that there are not

\* Theology and the Social Consciousness, p. 217.

† The Theology of an Evolutionist.



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occasional interventions in the order of life which bear witness to the presence of God, but that life itself is one great theophany; that there are not occasional interventions in the order of life which bear witness to the presence of God, but that life itself is a perpetual witness to his presence; that he transcends all phenomena, and yet is the creating, controlling, directing force in all phenomena."

Some of this may be accepted, but some of it would lead us into regions full of peril. If "God is immanent in the world of men" as he is "in the world of nature," what shall we say of sin? Dr. Abbott, it is true, recognizes sin and guilt, and does not tell us how he heals the inconsistency; but some of his disciples, who start with his doctrine of immanence, will reject his doctrine of sin as incompatible with it. We must deny the immanence of God in wicked souls, or else deny their wickedness. Or is the immanence of God in wicked souls a mere dead and inert immanence? If so, of what advantage is it?

4. Another truth brought into peril by the doctrine of immanence as taught by many Christian evolutionists is that of mediate creations. How incautious are the statements that "all



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nature and all life are one great theophany," and that God is the "creating, controlling, directing force in all phenomena." It cannot be that God creates men as they are by an immediate act of his will, else he would create sin. As we shall see elsewhere, more than half the races of the animal world have degenerated. To these lower orders God seems to have given the frightful prerogative of free choice, not only for themselves, but for their offspring, which inherit their preferences, not by an immediate creative fiat, but mediately, through the agency of natural laws. What we call the laws of heredity are not a pretence of God to hide his personal activity from us. Moreover, we do not regard vipers as theophanies, or believe that we are suppressing manifestations of God when we exterminate them. There are many phenomena in which we refuse to see the immediate creative will of God, as the birth of noxious insects and disease-bearing germs, and our conscience approves us when we prevent the possibility of their recurrence.

The earlier theologians had a feeling for such difficulties, and sought, though not with entire success, to alleviate them in stating their doctrine of immanence. Let us look first at their

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doctrine concerning the immanence of God in nature. "God is present everywhere in nature," they said, "and active everywhere. But, if active everywhere, in what is he active? What is he doing in nature?" They discussed the question whether he is creating the universe afresh at every moment, or whether he limits himself to sustaining and guiding it. They found it impossible to frame a doctrine of free human character, of religion, of sin, or of providence, on the supposition that everything in the universe is created afresh at every moment. But many of the Christian writers who accept the doctrine of evolution are not aware of the danger. "Creative days!" says Dr. Lyman Abbott. "Every day is a creative day. God is always creating."

Let us look again at the older doctrine concerning the immanence of God in man. I present it in the following propositions:

1. He is present even in the rebellious soul, which does not desire him. He dwells in such a soul, first, in order to maintain it in existence, though it employs the powers which he gives it to resist him; and secondly, to suggest holy thoughts, yet without infringing in the least its freedom of decision.

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2. He dwells in the soul which desires him in order to uphold both its natural and its spiritual life. In doing this, he leaves it free to serve him, if it shall prefer, or to rebel against him if it shall prefer, so that its decisions are its own. He does not force it by any act of power; but he so charms and wins it that its perseverance is certain, though uncompelled, like the allegiance of the wife to the husband whom she loves, free, spontaneous, and yet enduring as her life.

3. He is in the soul that stands on the border-line between these two conditions, penitent, conscious of a sinful nature, and praying for deliverance from it. He is present in such a soul to maintain its existence. But he is present also to give it spiritual life by an act of power, and not of mere persuasion. He brings a new character into being. He places on the throne motives before unknown, as love to God, to man, and to holiness, and hatred of all iniquity. The soul becomes "a new creation." Yet even in working this miracle of miracles, he does not violate the freedom of the will, for he regenerates it in response to its desires and petitions. The surgeon does not violate the freedom of the patient who invokes his skill.

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Among the many expressions about the immanence of God in man to be found in the writings of the Christian evolutionists, there is nothing so true to experience, so carefully guarded, or so helpful, as these distinctions, to which we have long been accustomed.

## CHAPTER IV

### CELESTIAL BIOLOGY

The Christian evolutionist often sets forth a conception of the creative process which he thinks new, and which he associates closely with his doctrine of immanence. The process of creation, he assures us, is one proceeding from within the materials of the universe, and is similar to the process of life and the growth which life produces. "The former theory of creation," says Dr. Lyman Abbott,\* "was of creation by manufacture. . . . Still many persons conceive of creation as a process of manufacture, and of God as a kind of architect or master-builder, laying foundations, putting up pillars, carving, upholstering, decorating, constructing the edifice in carpenter fashion." Over against this picture Dr. Abbott places one which he deems both truer and fairer. "The evolutionist believes that God's processes are the processes of growth, not of manufacture. . . . So far as we can see, God is never a manufacturer, but always does his work by growth processes. . . .

\* The Theology of an Evolutionist, p. 21.

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The process of growth is produced by forces that lie within the phenomena themselves." Dr. Abbott proceeds to describe these forces as analogous to those which produce growth in the animal and vegetable worlds: "The forces of nature are one vital force." The results of their action, he declares, are similar, not to a mechanism, but to a flower.

In all this Dr. Abbott agrees with John Fiske,\* who writes as follows: "Paley's simile of the watch is no longer applicable to such a world as this. It must be replaced by the simile of the flower. The universe is not a machine, but an organism, with an indwelling principle of life. It was not made, but it has grown."

These writers present to us four assertions which I must examine. They concern

1. The views of the creative processes formerly prevalent;

2. The character of the forces which have produced the stellar universe;

3. The character of the creative process; and

4. The character of the creation.

1. That the earlier views are misunderstood by these writers is seen at once when we recall what has been said of the perpetual faith of the

\*The Idea of God, p. 131.

## Celestial Biology

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church that God is immanent in his universe. The "flower" of these writers is attractive in itself, and many persons will accept their teaching because they admire beauty, and not because their judgment is convinced. But the "flower" gains an adventitious beauty when it is exhibited against an unattractive background of so-called traditional opinions. Whatever we may say of the universe, it is certain that this misshapen portrayal of the earlier views is a "manufacture." These writers do not distinguish between poetic and scientific representations. The poets have often pictured the beams and pillars of the world; they are still doing this, and the evolutionists among them not less frequently than others. But Christian thinkers, when writing with a strictly scientific purpose, have always taught that God is resident in the universe, and sustains and guides it from within. I have already shown this by extended proofs, but, in order to refresh them in the memory of the reader, I shall here quote from Professor Flint,\* the foremost living scholar in the history of theism. And first, concerning the teaching of the Roman Catholic schoolmen: "As to the general relation of God to the universe, few, if

\* Encyclopedia Britannica, art. "Theism."

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any of the schoolmen can be charged with deism. While assigning to God a being and life transcending the universe, they also affirmed that he was everywhere in the universe, everywhere wholly present, everywhere essentially and actively present." Next, concerning the Reformers: "In the confessions of the churches of the Reformation, nothing which the ancient church had œcumenically determined as regards that doctrine was rejected, and nothing was added."

2. The earlier theologians, believing in an immanent God, believed in a process of creation from within. But they did not represent it as wholly a process of life. Nor will any man do this who looks at the history of the universe with his own eyes. During the immensely larger part of that history we see no vital force whatever; we see mechanical and chemical forces, instead of the vital force. The beginning of life on our planet is relatively recent, even granting the vast stretches of time demanded by the extreme evolutionists. Nor has life, since its appearance here, done much to affect the general form of the earth, as in the upheaving of its mountains, the delimitation of its continents, or the hollowing out of its ocean



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beds. But when we turn to the sky, with its myriads of worlds, we discover no physical life of any kind. We venture the hardy conjecture that there may be planets capable of sustaining it, but all the planets of our own system, except the earth, seem to be unpropitious to it, and all the other worlds known to us are suns flaming with consuming fires. We see in the heavens only worlds shaped by mechanical and chemical forces and governed by the same. Why should we hesitate to call some of the forces of the universe mechanical, and some chemical? Why should we try to sum them all up under the category of the vital force? When heat makes the engine speed, we do not believe that it is life, or in any essential way analogous to life. Now it has been said, with no great degree of extravagance, that the history of heat is the history of the universe. When gravitation turns the water-wheel, we do not believe that it is life, or in any essential way analogous to life. Why then try to believe that it is life when we see it holding the universe together? Such confusions only beget a habit of misty thought, and teach us to neglect the plainest distinctions.

The earlier writers did not hold that the stellar

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universe is dead, when they taught that it was shaped and is now moved by the agency of mechanical and chemical forces. They saw God within these forces, upholding, replenishing, and directing them. Since he is the living God, they held the universe to be in some sense a living universe. But they did not hold this in a sense which required them to deny the broad distinction of forces which observation and experiment present to us. They often spoke of it as living, and not dead. To them it was filled with the life of God; but to them the life of God was not limited, either in its nature or in its processes, to the analogy of animal and vegetable life. To say that God has employed mechanical and chemical forces in forming and governing the physical universe is not to say that he has worked on his materials from without, like a carpenter. Heat can affect matter only as it is within, nor is gravitation an affair of surfaces.

Even Fiske,\* when he returns to scientific exactness of speech, recoils from the literal identification of all forces with the life-force. "The universe as a whole," he tells us, "is thrilling in every fiber with life." But this

\* The Idea of God, p. 149.

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statement seems to him rather strong, and he adds, "not, indeed, life in the usual restricted sense, but life in a general sense." In this modified form the statement differs but little, if at all, from the earlier views.

3. The processes employed in the formation of the universe, until we approach the very recent history of the little speck on which we dwell, have been mechanical and chemical, and not vital. No one has shown this more clearly than Fiske,\* for no one has written more clearly of the primitive fire-mist diffused through illimitable space by the mechanical force of heat, then moving about the center, impelled by the mechanical force of gravitation, then throwing off vast fragments as the speed of its revolutions increased, and finally appearing as the sidereal universe which we know. Is the extension of matter by heat a vital process? Is the revolution of a wheel a vital process? Is the flying of water-drops from its surface, owing to the rapidity of its motion, a vital process?

4. Nor are the products of the forces employed in the formation of the stellar universe like those of the vital force. A fire-mist is not like a tree. A revolving nebula is not like a

\* Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy.

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larkspur. A flaming sun is not like a spear of wheat. A solar system is not like a fish. Or, is there indeed no difference in principle between a grindstone sprinkling the air with a spray of water and a tulip? Astronomy is not biology. If some one should give us a book entitled "*Méchanique Céleste*," we should recognize it as the great work of La Place on astronomy. If some one should give us a book entitled "*Biologie Céleste*," we should laugh. There is a celestial mechanics; there is no celestial biology. The astronomers know more about the universe as a structure than any other persons, and they always speak of it as a mechanism, and never as a vital organism. The statement of Fiske that it must be conceived as analogous to a rose shows only that he was a poet.

## CHAPTER V

### CREATION BY EVOLUTION

#### EVOLUTION AS A METHOD OF CREATION

All evolutionists, of whatever school, tell us of creation by evolution, and of evolution as a method of creation. But the theistic evolutionists are especially fond of these phrases. God, they hold, created the universe, and chose evolution as his method. The process was that of creation by evolution.

What do these phrases mean as they are used by the Christian evolutionist?

There are certain things which they cannot mean.

I. The Christian evolutionist cannot use them to set forth the doctrine of a general progress from the lower to the higher in the formation of the universe. For, if he should do this, he would set forth only what has always been held by all theologians since the beginning of the church. The doctrine of progress in the formation of the universe is set forth in the first chapter of Genesis more clearly than anywhere else. All commentators have found it there, and have

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affirmed it as a part of revealed truth. It was a doctrine of exegesis long before it was a doctrine of physical science. But when the Christian evolutionist speaks of creation by evolution and of evolution as a method of creation, he seems to himself and to others to propound some recent discovery, and to rejoice in it as one rejoices only in some valuable addition to the sum of knowledge. It cannot be that he refers to this commonplace of the ages.

2. The Christian evolutionist, unless he is an exception to the rule, cannot use these phrases to designate the origin of matter and force, nor can he use them to designate the beginning of activity in the universe.

It is impossible for us to conceive of matter and force as having come into existence by a process of evolution. Evolution from what? In all ages there have been thinkers who have held that matter and force are from eternity. The Scriptures do not decide the question, nor does philosophy, and it is possible for the Christian evolutionist to deny to them an absolute beginning. If he does this, he necessarily denies that they are the products of evolution, for he denies that they are products at all. But if he traces them to a beginning, he will acknowledge that

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the act of creation by which they sprang into being was a stupendous instance of the supernatural.

Let us suppose, however, that he regards them as eternal. He pictures them as existing, but quiescent, before our universe took its first steps. All evolutionists point us back to a time when matter lay motionless in space in the form of a tenuous vapor, with force latent in it. The condition from which matter and force started was like that to which they must return at length, when their present course is run, as Herbert Spencer has shown. The Christian evolutionist pictures the determination of the immanent God to form of them a universe of law and order. He pictures their first slow stirrings from eternal slumber by the force of the divine will, and the beginning of motion in the once quiescent cloud. But this would not be evolution; on the contrary, it would be an infinite act of supernatural power.

Or let us suppose that we attempt to avoid this entire question of the eternity of matter and force by a resort to Berkleianism in its modern form. This speculation denies the usual conception of the reality of matter, and holds that, instead of atoms, we have to do with centers of

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force. Matter is real; it exists; but it exists only as force. The force which we call matter is put forth by God, who is immanent in the universe. This speculation is now in high favor with many theistic evolutionists. It is adopted by John Fiske, who assures us that it is held by the majority of scientific thinkers; and by Professor Shaler, who speaks of "the growing conviction of physicists that all matter is but a mode of action of energy; . . . that all phenomena whatever are but manifestations of power." It is sometimes called the dematerialization of matter. If we shall accept it as true, we shall find the beginning of the universe in the determination of God to put forth the energy which we call matter. The universe, therefore, had its beginning in a sublime act of supernatural power.

Thus whatever view of the beginning of the universe may be taken by the Christian evolutionist, he cannot call it creation by evolution. Or is there no difference between evolution and miracle? If not, why not go back frankly to the older forms of expression and speak of creation by miracle, and of the miraculous as the method of creation? But I cannot believe that the Christian evolutionist uses the phrases of



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which he is so fond to represent only old and time-worn thought.

3. The Christian evolutionist, unless he is an exception to the rule, cannot use the phrases to describe the subsequent history of the universe, the breaking up of the tenuous mass into vast cooling worlds, the throwing off of planets, the beginning and progress of life, and the bringing of man into being. For he holds with Alfred Russel Wallace that in these processes natural forces have been guided by God along beneficial channels. Given the beginning of matter and force, and their first activities, the universe would have continued a chaos, working at haphazard, if it had not received intelligent guidance. It would have achieved no progress and have had no history. But now, the guidance of a force by God, what is that? It is the application within it of a stronger force, so that its course is altered. In a manner somewhat similar man guides the forces of light, of heat, of electricity, and of steam, and compels them to do his will. But if God has thus guided the forces of nature along beneficial channels, he has perpetually intervened in their activities, turning them now in this direction, and now in that. Here, again, we have the supernatural

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mingling itself with the natural, and doing this systematically, from beginning to end, on the most stupendous scale. Nature is not trusted for a moment; she is not permitted to take a step alone; she is under perpetual tutelage; she is led by the hand. This is the exact opposite of evolution, and the Christian evolutionist, when he speaks of creation by evolution and of evolution as a method of creation, cannot mean the course of nature subsequent to its origin and determined momentarily by the power of God turning it "whithersoever he will, as the rivers of water are turned."

4. Can he mean, then, an uninterrupted chain of cause and effect from the beginning of the universe? That is what the untheistic evolutionist means, but it is what the Christian evolutionist usually denies. He affirms a stupendous act of God in the beginning. He affirms the continuous guidance of God throughout the entire course. He affirms the direct intervention of God in the origin of physical life in the universe. He affirms the direct intervention of God in the origin of the human soul, and so great an authority as Alfred Russel Wallace affirms it in the origin of the human body. He affirms the direct intervention of God in the

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person of Christ, whether he holds that Christ was merely human, or at once human and divine. Let us suppose that Christ was only a man "filled full of God," as has often been said. But a man "filled full of God" is not a mere natural man. Nature, the uninterrupted chain of cause and effect, does not produce such a man. The act of filling a man with God is distinctly a supernatural act. I need not pursue this path further, since it is so easily evident that it will not lead us to the meaning of the phrases as the Christian evolutionist employs them.

Perhaps at this point we should take account of those Christian evolutionists who see in every event the direct agency of the divine will, and deny the existence of second causes. But in general these writers distinguish between the ordinary and the extraordinary operations of God, and tell us that the former are what the majority of men call the laws of nature, and the latter what they call the supernatural. But, like other Christian evolutionists, these writers in general affirm that we discover in the history of the universe both the ordinary and the extraordinary action of God, both what the majority of men call the natural and what the majority of

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men call the supernatural. These evolutionists, therefore, cannot mean by the phrases which we are studying the ordinary action of God, which the majority of men call the chain of cause and effect, for they teach us that the extraordinary action of God is discovered at various critical periods of the history. Hence with a slight change of language, but with no change of the essential thought, what has been said of Christian evolutionists in general is to be said of this particular class of Christian evolutionists.

Apparently, now, there is not much territory left for us to search. Yet there are three suppositions worthy of examination.

I. The Christian evolutionist may regard the phrases as valuable because they express the immense tract of time through which the history of the universe stretches. If they do not deny the supernatural agency of God at the very beginning of the history, or his supernatural guidance through all its course, or his more marked interventions at critical points, they may still express our belief that he spent a longer time in his creative work than our fathers supposed. With all my heart. Only, if this is what the Christian evolutionist means by the phrases, he

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should define them, for his ordinary use of them leads us to uncertainty and confusion.

2. The Christian evolutionist may value the phrases as an expression of his belief that the supernatural interventions in the history of the universe have not been so frequent as our fathers supposed. They have taken place, but at wide intervals. Here again we can assent to his statement, but we must still beg him to tell us in what sense he uses the language of evolution, lest we misunderstand him, and attribute to him opinions with which he would not wish to be associated.

3. Or, again, the Christian evolutionist may employ the phrases to express the conviction that God, in guiding nature, and in his more special interventions in the orderly course of natural cause and effect, has wrought very softly and gradually, so that his footsteps are not clearly seen. He has acted in a manner to simulate the ordinary operations of cause and effect, even while modifying them profoundly. I am often led to believe that this is the real meaning of the phrases as the Christian evolutionist employs them. He does not define them in this manner; but when I find him on one

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page ascribing an event to the ordinary processes of cause and effect, and on another to the direct agency of God, I have a right to infer his definition. Thus John Fiske tells us in his "Life Everlasting"\* that the animal passed up into the human owing to "the long and cumulative play of cause and effect which wrought the lengthening of the period of helpless babyhood and the correlative maternal care, and which thus differentiated the non-human horde of primates into a group of human clans." But elsewhere† he says: "Whence came the soul we no more know than we know whence came the universe. The primal origin of consciousness is hidden in the depths of the bygone eternity. That it cannot possibly be the product of any cunning arrangement of material particles is demonstrated beyond peradventure by what we know of the correlation of the physical forces. The Platonic view of the soul, as a spiritual substance, an effluence from the Godhead, which under certain conditions becomes incarnated in perishable forms of matter, is doubtless the view most consonant with the present state of our knowledge." How can I put such apparently discrepant statements

\* P. 34.

† The Destiny of Man, p. 42.

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together in a harmonious whole without supposing that those who make them, while they find the supernatural in the universe, find it disguised, so that it may be described now in the terms of natural causation, and now in the terms of divine intervention?

If the phrases under discussion mean any or all of these three things, they are not generally understood by those who hear them. But, taking the meaning as we seem to find it after our exhaustive search, does it possess any value? Does it give us any new or helpful view of God or of the universe? I confess that it does not aid me to a better understanding of either. Whether I fix my attention upon a hundred millions of years as the period of the creative process, or upon ten millions of years, and whether I reckon the special interventions at a hundred thousand or at ten thousand, makes no great difference in my knowledge of the Creator or of the creation.



## CHAPTER VI

### SECOND CAUSES

Some Christian evolutionists find great comfort in the conviction that God is the only force in nature, and the only cause of all the effects which are produced. They declare that "there are no second causes." \* Let us not interpret the words as rhetoric or poetry, for they are written as scientifically exact. I suppose it would be admitted by the majority of this school that man is a real cause of phenomena, though few of them say so, and many of them teach a doctrine of the divine immanence in man which goes far towards the denial that he is anything more than a channel through which the will of God pours itself abroad. But let us grant that man is a real cause, and then proceed to weigh the declaration that all phenomena which he does not produce are produced directly by God through such acts of his will as exclude second causes.

I. If this is true the universe is a stupendous deception, for it seems to be full of second

\* Dr. Lyman Abbott, *The Theology of an Evolutionist*, p. 9.



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causes. Nay, there are long chains of what we call second causes, embracing untold numbers of links, as when a given state of the atmosphere produces thunder-clouds which set cities on fire with their discharges and thus change the fate of individuals, of nations, and perhaps of the human race. I may quote Stewart and Tait,\* who give us two familiar examples: "In a steam-engine the amount of work produced depends upon the amount of heat carried from the boiler to the condenser; and this amount depends in its turn upon the amount of coal which is burned in the furnace of the engine. In like manner the velocity of the bullet which issues from the rifle depends upon the transformation of the energy of the powder; this in turn depends upon the explosion of the percussion cap; this again upon the fall of the trigger; and lastly this upon the finger of the man who fires the rifle." But enough. Those who deny the operation of second causes in the universe never deny that they seem to surround us on every side and to embrace us in an inextricable network of phenomena, every one of which might be traced back through a line of apparent causes and effects to the very beginning. Now to what end

\* *The Unseen Universe*, p. 184.

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has God entered into this skilful simulation of second causes?

2. But the moral difficulty is yet deeper. If all phenomena except those which man produces, are caused by direct acts of the divine will, then we may well believe that God is a mixed character, with impulses of benevolence, but also with freaks of cruelty, to-day a Father, tomorrow a demon. He causes the mother bird to feed her young, but he causes her also to tear in pieces the young of neighboring nests. He causes the viper to bite and kill the innocent laborer in the fields. He causes the germs of diphtheria to grow in the throat of the babe, and looks down unmoved upon the agony which he produces. A volcano \* in Japan was supposed to be so nearly extinct that it was safe. A vast population lived upon its slopes and tilled the soil enriched by the decay of ashes and lava poured forth in distant ages. Suddenly it exploded, and one of its sides was blown into the air, with several thousand inhabitants, men, women, children, babes. Fragments of it mingled with their flesh and blood were found ten miles away. Now we are to believe that this

\* Percival Lowell, *Occult Japan*.

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awful catastrophe was an outbreak of God, and not of natural forces.

The view to which the Christian world has been accustomed alleviates the difficulty, though without entirely removing it. This view has relation to the world, first, as the home of a sinless race, and secondly, as the home of a sinful race.

Were the human race sinless, the separation of soul and body might take place, as at present, and in this sense men would die. But death in the deeper sense of the Biblical writers would be unknown. It is in this deeper sense that "death entered the world by sin." "The sting of death is sin," but as there would be no sin in the world which we now picture to ourselves, the separation of soul and body would not be associated with horror. Yet even in a sinless world men would be moved by the natural love of life and the natural dread of pain. They would be exposed to accident and disease and premature dissolution. Their situation would be favorable, since it would lead, on one hand to prayer, and on the other to united endeavors to master the dangerous forces of nature, such as earthquake, tempest, flood, flame, malaria,

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wild beasts, serpents, poisonous vegetation, and noxious insects. Such a world would rapidly educate a sinless race in piety, energy, sympathy, helpfulness. In a sinless race the spirit of brotherhood would prevail, and, by the united endeavors of all, nature would soon be rendered harmless, though it would always require watching and curbing. Only a few men are engaged to-day in the combat with the dangerous forces of nature, but they are achieving marvelous successes. The effort of these very few, we may say, began not two centuries ago; yet it is leading to results so gratifying as to warrant the hope that accident and contagion will be abolished in the near future. What would not be accomplished by the entire human race united in the task, and uninfluenced by indolence, indifference to the fate of others, and selfish greed? The world just as it is would be an admirable home for the education of a sinless race.

But now, we must look at the world as the actual home of a sinful race. Man was placed in the garden of the world "to dress it and to keep it." God commanded him to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every

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living thing that moveth upon the earth.’’ Man would have fulfilled this lofty destiny had he been sinless. But he forfeited the charter of his royalty. The earth now brings forth thorns and thistles to him, and the serpent bruises his heel. Yet it is the same earth endowed with the same forces which we pictured as the home of a sinless race. Sin has made men too indolent and too selfish for their high duties. They have no consciousness of brotherhood, and no union for defence against hostile forces. They are a multitude of islands, instead of a firm continent. To such a race the world is a terrible school of chastisement and tears, and yet a necessary school. The civilized nations would care but little for the wretchedness of Asia and Africa if these pestilential regions did not send forth the cholera and the bubonic plague. Even in the most highly civilized lands the rich would not hear the bitter cry of the poor if they did not dread diphtheria and scarlet fever and consumption, which are bred from filth. As it is, the more intelligent and wealthy classes tend to place their reliance in quarantines and disinfectants, instead of uniting to relieve and enlighten “the dark places of the earth.’’ This world is good to men in proportion as they are good to

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one another, and evil to them in proportion as they are evil to one another. In other words, it is good for the purpose for which it was created, a home in which the human race may be taught to trust God and love man. It must be terrible in order at all to instruct us. The lesson of brotherhood, which we have been slow to learn from the gospel, we are compelled to learn from contagion. The world seems ignorant of values, and crushes in its wheels the mother, the babe, the saint; but even this sternness is salutary, since it shows us that our sin takes from us the fairest and best, as well as the foul whom we gladly dismiss. If sin brought pain and premature death only to the extremely wicked, we might commit it in moderation without fear or loathing. I can understand a world thus formed to deal with the race as a race, adjustable to the moral state of the race, propitious to an innocent and fraternal race, but terrible to a self-seeking race. I can understand when an innocent race is given dominion over the tiger, the serpent, the thistle, the upas, and the bacillus of cholera, and when a selfish race makes itself subject to these enemies. But I cannot understand a world in which my dominion over these things is only a dominion over God, and in which their

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dominion over me is nothing else than the dominion of God in the most loathly forms.

Something like this was the older view. It explained much, though not all. The substitute offered to us explains nothing.

## CHAPTER VII

### SIN AND SALVATION

The doctrine of sin which the majority of Christian evolutionists are inclined to accept is stated so clearly by Dr. Lyman Abbott \* that I avail myself here of his language:

Man is an animal—about this there can be no question—a vertebrate animal, belonging to the class mammal, and by most scientists reckoned in the family of apes. And he has ascended from a lower animal. . . . We are animals, we ascended from lower animals. Whether we like the fact or not, it is a fact. . . . But we are more than animals. . . . We have the spiritual life, the life of conscience, faith, hope, love. . . . God breaths into man the breath of divine life. . . . The human, the moment it passes the invisible boundary line and becomes human, comes under the law of the human, that is, under the law of God, under the law of right and wrong. . . . The law of the animal is superseded by the law of the spiritual.

We have a large inheritance of animal selfishness and passion. To sin is to give way unlawfully to the animal within us. The sinner is the man who permits the animal within him to reign over him.

Every man, when he yields to temptation and sins, falls from a higher to a lower, from a spiritual to an animal con-

\* The Theology of an Evolutionist, chap. iii.



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dition. He falls back to that state from which he had begun to emerge. It is true that the animal man is worse in his animalism than the animal from which he has emerged or is emerging. The ferocity of the tiger is no match for that of the ferocious man: the intemperance of the brute is far less than that of the brutalized man. How can it be otherwise when the higher powers which God has conferred upon him are subordinated to and made the instruments of his animalism?

John Fiske\* states the doctrine more succinctly: "Theology has had much to say about original sin. This original sin is neither more nor less than the brute-inheritance which every man carries with him."

I wish to assure the reader that I am stating the common doctrine of the school, and I therefore quote also from Bascom: †

In place of the fall of Adam, original sin, inherited sin, the transmission of penalty to the third and fourth generation, we have the burden of an inferior animal life, only slowly shaken off, and permeated with the utmost difficulty with higher, more vital impulses. The first series of beliefs is the rendering of the facts of human life theoretically, with inadequate knowledge; the second is a rendering of them, to the same ends, under an extended historical grasp of the situation.

But enough. A state of sin, if these writers may be believed, is a state in which the animal

\* *The Destiny of Man*, p. 103.

† *Evolution and Religion*, p. 103.

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predominates, and an act of sin is an act in which the animal predominates, to the degradation of the sinner and perhaps to the injury of others.

The righteous man, on the other hand, is the man who subdues the animal within him and cultivates the higher nature with which God has already endowed him. To become a Christian is to begin the combat against the animal and for the higher nature. Prayer, the church, the ordinances, all religious agencies, may be valuable, simply because they may aid in the suppression of the animal and the development of the higher nature. When God intervenes in Christ, and, if we grant the reality of such an event, by personal mystic contact with the soul, it is that he may aid in the suppression of the animal and the development of the higher nature. If the doctrine of sin taught by these evolutionists is true, this doctrine of regeneration and the regenerate life is necessarily true. Thus to the declaration that "original sin is nothing more nor less than the brute-instinct which every man carries with him," Fiske adds: "And the process of evolution is an advance towards true salvation."

I know of no exception to the statement that

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Christian evolutionists who hold sin to be mere animalism, substitute the development of the soul for regeneration and conversion. Let Bascom testify as an example of his class:

We are led to substitute for "conversion," which is a sudden convulsive change in the spirit itself, growth, which is a slow and healthy accumulation of life. We come to understand that our lives gain their powers, not by being uprooted, but by being rooted, in a more wholesome and comprehensive way, in the world. We have made the same mistake in theology that we have made in penology. We have expected that a few concentrated and terrible motives would sweep from the heart of man its evil passions and make it fruitful in obedience. We have not understood how many, how slight, how far and near, are the incentives which promote and secure spiritual development, and how confluent they must become from all quarters of the physical and moral world before they can show their divine interlock and adequacy. A sudden surging in of forces is no more conducive to spiritual growth than is a deluge to vegetable life. The dew-drops, the gentle, discontinuous rain, are the servants of God. The violent converging forces which express themselves in "conversion" are very inferior in productive power to the manifold, ever-varied, and ever-renewed incentives which steal in upon us from a world deeply at one with us in its wants and discipline.

The church therefore should become somewhat like an ethical culture society. It should modify its doctrines of sin and grace, and should cease to expect immediate decisions of the will

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and immediate transformations of the ruling motive. It should cease to speak of regeneration, and should speak only of education and development. And finally, it should confess that its entire experience as an evangelistic agency has been a mistake.

Still further. This low estimate of sin will lead logically to a changed view of the future destiny of the wicked soul. "Take such a doctrine," says Bascom,\* "as that of everlasting punishment, the penalty of sin. It remains with men so long as they have not the ideas of justice, patience, renovation, and grace, which inevitably exclude it. As these ideas gain ground, this conception gives way. It ceases to have interpreting power. It becomes a perversion of the moral order, creative purpose, and growing beauty of the world."

But now the church will not accept this low estimate of sin. The church is the highest authority on the subject, for she has studied all its phases for two thousand years, analyzing it, weighing it, measuring it, until there is no characteristic of it which she has not recorded. Animalism is sin, but sin is not animalism; it is a principle far deeper and deadlier.

\* *Evolution and Religion*, p. 189.

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Were sin mere animalism, death would remove it by taking away the body and extinguishing the carnal appetites and passions and leaving the higher nature free to dominate the soul and constitute the character. But the Scriptures do not present death as a remedy for sin. Suicide is not redemption.

Were sin mere animalism, the reformed man would be the Christian man. But in many cases it is not so. The reformed man may have secured entire control of his animal appetites and passions, and yet be alienated from God in his self-sufficiency.

There are men who from birth have been free from any controlling influence of animalism, and yet refuse to accept the law of God, and are a law to themselves.

In the museums of the Vatican one may see sculpture in three stages of preservation. Some pieces are battered and broken. Some are mended so skilfully that the observer can scarcely detect the line of jointure between the old and the new. Some are perfect as when they left the hands of the artist. But all are alike dead. If a miracle should give life to them all, it would work in the same manner in all. It would have to fill out and repair in one

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instance more than in another, but it would create hearts and brains and nerves in all.

The man who has the habit of animalism, the man who has conquered the habit, and the man who never formed the habit, may be alike destitute of the life of God, and alike hostile to it. Indeed, no sin is harder to reach and remedy than that of the correct and self-centered man. All these men, typical of great classes, have exactly the same need of divine grace. Admitted to the heart and life of the reformed man, or of the man who has needed no reformation, it creates a revolution as profound, a surprise as great, and a gratitude as fervent as in any other cases, and the recipients wonder like young children that they misconceived it and rejected it, and adore the Being who wrought within them that which they themselves would not seek and could not accomplish.

There were two prodigal sons, and the one who stayed at home was as destitute of a filial disposition and as hard to reclaim as the one who went "into a far country and wasted his substance with riotous living."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GODHEAD

In his argument in favor of natural selection Darwin considers animal organs in three stages of heredity. First, those in full use. Secondly, the rudimentary, which were useful to the remote ancestors of the species, but are useless now, and yet not wholly discarded. Thirdly, those midway between the extremes, for which there is but little present use, and which tend to become rudimentary. If the rudimentary organs were once visible, they are now usually covered with flesh or skin, and buried out of sight, like the teeth of the calf and the bones of the hind legs in the whale. In addition to these three classes of organs, we must think of those which once existed but have entirely vanished owing to a longer disuse than that which has reduced the rudimentary organs to their present state. An organ, therefore, must be used if it is to be transmitted in full vigor through successive generations. Entire disuse will condemn it first to the rudimentary state and then to extinction.

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Something like this law prevails in the history of doctrines. A doctrine is transmitted through the centuries if it is used in the formation of theological systems, of Christian experience, or of Christian character. But when it is held for a long time as a mere isolated opinion, or as a mere isolated article of a creed, it sinks to the rudimentary condition and then to obsolescence. In the rudimentary form it is not preached, and is as little noticed as if it had been consciously rejected.

Now many theistic evolutionists tend to deny the deity of Christ, and to regard him as only a man produced by the ordinary processes of generation. "The more intelligent we become," Bascom \* writes, "the more perplexing and uninformative is the assertion that Christ, as we know him, is the Second Person in the Trinity." Hence, to such persons as Bascom, salvation through Christ is instruction, and not the mystic influence of a person infinite in love and power. "It is not easy to understand," he says, "how the personality of Christ should differ in its physical elements or in its intellectual constitution from the personality of man; nor how, if it did differ, we should be able to define the

\* *Evolution and Religion*, pp. 164, 7.



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difference, his personality offering itself, as it does, under a strictly human guise; nor how any such difference could be of any great moment to us. We are saved, not by what Christ is, in the recesses of his own nature, but by the revelations of truth he makes to us."

It is not difficult to reconcile the doctrine of the deity of Christ with that of theistic evolution, and this is done by many. The person of Christ was exceptional, in any view of it which we may take, and to account for it requires the admission of unusual divine action. If he was only a man, still he was a man of unprecedented endowments, and his production required unprecedented causes. Here we are in the territory of the supernatural, and the admission that Christ was the God-man is not distant from us. Yet the tendency even of the theistic doctrine of evolution is to minimize the supernatural and to enlarge the natural, and hence to see in Christ as little of the supernatural and as much of the natural as possible. But further; as the theory of evolution tends to minimize sin, to find religious life in every man waiting to be developed, and to offer a process of spiritual education as a substitute for regeneration, conversion, and inner divine grace, it leaves little reason and

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little desire to discover in Christ a being above the highest possible level of humanity. Hence there is a strong inclination to-day within the evangelical churches to deny the virgin birth and all the remarkable events associated with it in the New Testament. Muir\* observes this, even while seeking to find a place for the deity of Christ in the scheme of evolution. "Notable attempts," he says, "have been made from time to time, and especially in our own age, to explain these phenomena as mythological accretions." The Christian world is no longer shocked when it hears its teachers denying these things, for its own driftings towards the doctrine of evolution have prepared it to welcome what it once abhorred, or at least to be more than patient with it.

If many Christian evolutionists tend to exclude the deity of Christ from their active beliefs, they tend also to exclude the trinity, for there can be no trinity if Christ is not a member of it. The doctrine of the trinity began to take shape in the minds of Christians when they observed that the New Testament attributes to Christ all the powers and characteristics of God, and it was fully formed when they observed that it

\* Christianity and Evolution, p. 78.

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does the same thing with reference to the Holy Spirit, though with less of emphasis and insistence. And as the doctrine of the trinity owed its origin in the early centuries to the doctrine of the deity of Christ, it owes its existence in every age to the same doctrine. It is an exegetical doctrine; that is, it lives chiefly because it is rooted so strongly in the soil of the New Testament that the winds of philosophical and arithmetical objections have no power to destroy it. But when exegesis shall have succeeded in denying the deity of Christ it will find far less difficulty in denying the separate personality of the Holy Spirit, and in reducing the Godhead to absolute unity. The doctrine of the trinity is also rooted strongly in Christian experience. But when the work of Christ shall have been reduced to mere moral and spiritual influence, Christian experience will not be the same; it will take on an aspect of rigid propriety; it will breathe a colder atmosphere; and, wrapped in the cloak of its rectitude, it will not care whether the Godhead is adapted from eternity to the spiritual wants of the awakened soul seeking for divine aid to think and feel and act aright. The process of reducing the Godhead to bald unity is already finished in many Christian minds, and

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in others it is so well advanced that the doctrine of the trinity is neither preached nor heard with pleasure, and has assumed the rudimentary state. There is a possibility that in the entire Protestant world it will soon pass below the plane of consciousness under the influence of evolutionary thought, which makes sin a less heinous thing, and finds no need of such remedial activities as have been attributed to Christ and the Holy Spirit. The church will not long preserve a doctrine for which it has no use.

The manner in which the doctrine of the trinity may be made to disappear under the influence of evolutionary thought is illustrated in two recent books by President King, of Oberlin College; "Reconstruction in Theology," and "Theology and the Social Consciousness." In both the author creates the impression that the doctrine of the essential trinity is not necessary, and, indeed, not useful. Without denying it, he labors to show that the value attributed to it by many writers resides elsewhere, so that one may ignore it and yet suffer no loss. If the church shall adopt this opinion the doctrine may linger long in her formularies, as an interesting but inert relic of past ages, but ultimately she

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will thrust it out of her confessions of faith as a disagreeable incumbrance.

Will the world be better off in this next stage of the evolution of our theology, should we advance to it? History does not warrant us to enter upon it with any very glowing anticipations.

The Arians had a conception of Christ far loftier than that presented to us by the majority of those who now obscure his proper deity under the influence of evolutionary thought. They worshiped him as the source of their moral and spiritual renovation. They sang hymns to him. They had wise and courageous leaders and a thorough organization. They enjoyed the support of the Roman empire for generations. But they faded away owing chiefly to the intrinsic inferiority of their beliefs. Christ, after all, was not quite God; he was a lofty Being sent to represent God, that is, to fill the gap between God and the soul. This led to the feeling that God was an absentee from his world, though the Arians probably announced the doctrine of the divine immanence as clearly as Augustine himself. If we may judge the future by the past, we may say that this will always be the effect when Christ is presented to men as a delegate

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from God, armed with plenary perfections, yet not God in fact.

I have many Unitarian friends whose devoutness, whose purity, and whose charity rebuke me. Yet I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that Unitarianism has never been a strong redemptive force. It has been tried repeatedly. It has had great opportunities. It has had wise and enterprising leaders. But it has always failed to save the communities in which it has been most firmly planted. It has not even kept its own children. It has won from the world a select few, but the great mass of the sinning and the suffering have sought the help which they needed in the trinitarian denominations. Is it that we must see the blackness of sin in order to rescue sinners? Is it that we must hate sin, rather than sins, in order to remedy it? Is it that a human Christ who is not also deity, however richly endowed with the grace of God, cannot stir the heart and master the will? Is it that an impersonal Holy Spirit cannot be trusted to "make intercession" in our souls "with groanings which cannot be uttered?" Is it that a Father who is not "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" in any essential sense cannot win the saving confidence of men, but ever

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remains at a chilly distance from them, thrust back by their guilty unbelief? The difficulty may be found in some of these things, in all, or in none. But no matter. It exists. It has existed for ages. It never grows less. The churches will not gain power if they suffer the doctrine of evolution to eclipse the deity of Christ and the separate personality of the Holy Spirit, and to give them instead the untempered unity of God, with a Christ who reveals God but is not God. They will find themselves in a condition like that of the earth in the coming age of night and frost which the scientific evolutionists predict for it.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE UNITY OF ALL KNOWLEDGE

The Christian evolutionist often regards the doctrine of evolution highly as a means of unifying all knowledge. Bascom devotes an entire chapter to this subject. He divides the territory of knowledge into three fields; science, philosophy, and religion. The doctrine of evolution, he declares, shows us that these are all united "in subject-matter, in method of enquiry, and in the aid and correction which they bring each other."

Those who believe in the unity of all knowledge must necessarily modify or wholly deny the common Christian conception of God, and leave him but little freedom of action in the universe, if any.

Here we must consider the two classes of untheistic evolutionists, the materialistic and the agnostic. The materialistic evolutionist denies the existence of God, and finds in the universe a closed system, an autonomy, a self-unfoldment, and hence is driven to explain philosophy, religion, and art, as he explains the formation of



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worlds and the origin of vegetable and animal life. The agnostic evolutionist neither affirms nor denies the existence of God; he limits his view to the universe itself, and declares that if God exists he does not intervene in any manner at any point of its history. Thus the agnostic evolutionist, also, is compelled to the effort to unify all knowledge, since God, if he exists, manifests himself as little in the growth of religions as in the growth of crystals.

The evolutionists of these schools have achieved some apparent successes in their efforts to unify certain departments of knowledge. The materialistic evolutionists, of whom Haeckel is the best known representative, have labored earnestly upon this task; but the agnostic, led by Herbert Spencer, have accomplished more. The writers of these schools, in their efforts to unify all knowledge under the single conception of evolution, encounter great chasms which the mind at first refuses to pass. They attempt to bridge over these separating clefts, but as they have few materials to use for the purpose except words, their labor is difficult, and, when it is finished, the great majority of men refuse to trust the structures. One of these gulfs is found between the inorganic and

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the organic worlds, and Tyndall attempted to cross it on a well known bridge of words: "I see in matter the promise and potency of every form and quality of terrestrial life." Others lie between the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and between the animal kingdom and man. The bridges of words employed at these places are appraised by Wallace\* as follows: "No verbal explanation, or attempt at explanation, such as the statement that life is the result of the molecular forces of the protoplasm, or that the whole existing organic universe, from amœba up to man, was latent in the fire-mist from which the solar system was developed, can afford any mental satisfaction, or help in any way to a solution of the mystery."

While the untheistic evolutionist is driven by the necessity of his position to attempt the unification of all knowledge, the Christian evolutionist ought to find himself drawn in the contrary direction. Unless he is an exception to the rule, he believes in a God everywhere present and everywhere active. He believes that the laws of nature are ordained by God, or else, if there are no laws of nature, that God has certain regular habits of action which the majority of

\* Darwinism, chap. xv.

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men call the laws of nature. But he believes also that God transcends the limits of natural law, or of his ordinary habits, and acts in unusual ways, and he recognizes exceptional phenomena as what the majority of men call supernatural. He believes that God has acted in an unusual way in the beginning of the universe, in the origination of physical life, in the origination of the human soul, in the person of Christ, and in the guidance of his church. He might escape this necessity of his position by denying the supernatural, and by giving to the universe a God who has only one manner of working. But, in that case, would we call him a Christian evolutionist?

I conclude that the Christian can gain little advantage from the doctrine of evolution as a means of unifying knowledge, unless he first abandons all that is distinctive of his faith.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SUPERNATURAL IN GENERAL

Some Christian evolutionists suppose that they have gained an advantage in their discussion of the supernatural. They proceed in this way. A miracle, it was formerly assumed, is a violation of the laws of nature. Moreover, it is a mere prodigy, unworthy of God, appealing only to wonder. Still further; in order to produce it God comes into nature from without. Ordinarily nature is given over by him to the operation of natural laws, while he retires from it and "sees it go;" but when a miracle is wrought he comes down from his height, paralyzes them, and acts according to the good pleasure of his immediate will. That I do not miscolor these representations of the older views I shall now show by a quotation from Dr. Lyman Abbott:\* "The chief reason why modern thinkers find it difficult to believe in what we call miracles is either because we have blindly accepted the too common definition of miracles as a violation of the laws of nature, or

\* The Theology of an Evolutionist, chap. ix.

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because we have confounded them with mere marvels and wonders, or because we have thought of God as an absentee God, and the miracle as the token of an exceptional presence." These errors are corrected by the doctrine of evolution, which shows us that God is immanent in nature, that he is always working in nature, and that what we call the laws of nature are only his usual methods of working, while the miracles are only his unusual methods of working. The miracle is not a violation of natural law. Our term "natural law" is merely an expression to denote the habits of God, and our term "miracle" an expression to denote an exceptional departure from his habits, such as any intelligent being may take for special good reasons.

Something like this is the congratulatory statement of many Christian evolutionists concerning the benefit which they have received from the doctrine of evolution in its relation to the supernatural. It will be observed that I have assumed the denial of second causes on the part of these evolutionists, and the statement would need a few verbal changes to adapt it to those who do not follow John Fiske and Dr. Abbott at this point.

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I am afflicted again with the necessity of saying that this representation of the earlier views is born of the imagination of those who put it forth. None of these three errors has ever been held by any Christian thinker of note.

1. I am weary of repeating the denial that the doctrine of the immanence of God in nature was ever doubted or questioned by any theologian. The story of an "absentee God, sitting above the world and seeing it go," is nothing more than a pleasant invention of an age of fiction. Hence the miracle has never been regarded by the Christian thinker as the coming of God into the universe from without. To prove once more this much-proved truth, I shall quote from Trench,\* who wrote in 1846, thirteen years before the modern debate on evolution was precipitated by the appearance of "The Origin of Species." "The distinction," he says, "which is sometimes made, that in the miracle God is immediately working, and in other events is leaving it to the laws which he has established to work, cannot at all be admitted; for it has its root in a dead mechanical view of the universe which lies altogether remote from the truth. The clock-maker makes his clock

\* Notes on the Miracles, p. 17.

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and leaves it; the ship-builder builds and launches his ship and others navigate it; but the world is no curious piece of mechanism which its maker makes and then dismisses from his hands, only from time to time reviewing and repairing it." Lest some one should say that this is an exceptional expression, I shall still further detain the reader with a quotation from Bushnell,\* written one year before the appearance of "The Origin of Species." Nature "is, in fact, a Thing; while the real kingdom of God is a kingdom of Powers, himself the Regal Power. Both he and they are continually using the Thing, and pouring their activity into it, as the medial point of their relationship."

2. Nor have Christian thinkers ever taught that miracles are "violations of the laws of nature." This definition comes to us from the deists, who, after making it to suit themselves, proceeded to criticise it adversely as that which their opponents believed. It is Hume† who says, "A miracle may be accurately defined a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent." This definition has met

\* Nature and the Supernatural, p. 250.

† Human Understanding. Of Miracles, x., note.

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the steadfast protest of all Christians who have thought on the subject. Thus Bushnell writes, before the modern discussion of evolution: "It is not said, be it observed, as is sometimes done, that the supernatural implies a suspension of the laws of nature, a causing them, for the time, not to be." There has probably never been a time when Christian thinkers would not have assented to the statement of Calderwood \* that a miracle is "an event which, without being a violation of the laws of nature, cannot be accounted for by those laws, but implies the operation of causal energy superior to their action."

3. It follows that no Christian ever thought of miracles as mere prodigies. The slight-of-hand performer produces prodigies. The spiritualist medium produces prodigies. Nature produces prodigies, such as calves with two heads and Siamese twins and men with twelve toes. Christian thinkers have always set forth the Biblical miracles as works morally worthy of God, designed to warn, to succor, and to teach.

I do not find much advantage in the doctrine of evolution as a means of reconciling the mind to the conception of the supernatural. All that the Christian evolutionist claims for it was the

\* Krauth, *Vocabulary of the Philosophical Sciences*.



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common possession of the church before it became prevalent. If “modern thinkers find it difficult to believe in what we call miracles,” it is not “because we have blindly accepted the too common definition of miracles as a violation of the laws of nature, or because we have confounded them with mere marvels and wonders, or because we have thought of God as an absentee God, and the miracle as the token of an exceptional presence.” We have done none of these things.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BIBLICAL MIRACLES

There are theistic evolutionists who deny that any supernatural event has taken place in the history of the universe. But in few instances have Christian evolutionists done this. Usually they see supernatural events in the origin of the universe, in the origin of life, and in the origin of the human soul. They see supernatural agency in the incarnation of Christ, a character who could not have been produced by the ordinary laws of heredity and environment. They may go further and admit some others of the Biblical miracles. Yet in many instances Christian evolutionists accept them with evident reluctance, and search for some way of escape from the conflict between the great emphasis which the doctrine of evolution lays upon the natural, and the great emphasis which Christianity lays upon the supernatural. I shall now examine the ways to which they are most strongly attracted, to see if these promise any great advantage.

1. The Christian evolutionist has been

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tempted to limit the supernatural to the region of mind, and thus to deny it in the material world. This would permit him to behold it in the character of Christ and in those celestial influences which we receive in answer to the prayer of penitence and faith. But he usually recoils from this path, after surveying it with longing, because it would lead him into difficulty with the origin of the physical universe and the origin of physical life. Moreover, it would lead him into equal difficulty with the origin of the human soul, for this must have been accompanied by an alteration in the structure of the brain, a physical process. Still further, it would lead him into almost insuperable difficulty with his Bible, and in particular would make it necessary to pronounce the gospels an assemblage of beautiful fairy-stories, for the great majority of the miracles recorded of Christ and the apostles have to do with matter, like the healings of disease.

2. Finding no refuge in this direction, he has sought relief in the effort to limit the number of the Biblical miracles. He has constructed a critical apparatus of qualities so marvelous that it cuts away some miracles, while it spares others, and all without any precise rules which ordinary

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reason can discover. Indeed, the particular miracles which it cuts away depend upon the person who operates it, and the results present an agreeable variety from which the learner may select at his pleasure. In some hands it cuts away the entire fabric of Old Testament miracles. In some hands it cuts away the walking on the water, the withering of the fig tree, and the finding of the coin in the mouth of the fish. In others, it cuts away the virgin birth. There are Christian evolutionists who actually regard this process with satisfaction as a means of escaping mental difficulty.

But the conflict is not to be composed in this manner. It is not even to be modified. The expedient is as if one should be blamed for the statement that three and two equal seven, and should offer as a concession the statement that three and two equal six. This would not be a correction. The conflict is between exclusive naturalism in religious thought and the union of naturalism and supernaturalism, and not between naturalism and a certain percentage of the total number of the miracles. The evolutionist who longs for God will not find relief from mental difficulty by rejecting the virgin birth. The evolutionist who does not desire God will not

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find relief in the denial of the virgin birth coupled with the assertion of the resurrection. The evolutionist who does not desire God may be thankful for this rejection of a part, but only because it enables him to reject the whole with a better grace.

3. The effort to diminish the number of the miracles is sometimes accompanied by an effort to show that those which remain are not so very miraculous, after all, and stand near to the heart of nature. The turning of water into wine was only an imitation and a hastening of processes going on in the grape and the vat, and the feeding of the five thousand only an imitation and a hastening of processes going on in the fields, in the sea, and in the kitchen. The resurrection of Christ may have been nothing more than the revival of his spirit, and his appearances to his disciples after his crucifixion nothing more than a temporary materialization, or an opening of their eyes to see that which is hidden from the majority of men. I might multiply these examples, but I have adduced enough to illustrate the method by which some Christian evolutionists seek to narrow the chasm between the natural and the Biblical supernatural. Their motives are to be com-

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mended, for they hope to make it easier for other evolutionists to cross to their side. But when the evolutionist, now skeptical, becomes a seeker after God in Christ, he will not care to have the opening of the blind eyes explained by the application of the clay, or the raising of the dead explained as an ordinary recovery from a cataleptic swoon. On the other hand, the evolutionist who does not desire the God whom Christ reveals will only be encouraged in his attitude of indifference by these weak efforts to commend the gospel to him. A vigorous assertion of the supernatural is often a means of winning men to the divine life. The heart that is sore with its sins and its doubts will welcome the message which tells of a Christ endowed with "all authority in heaven and earth," and "able to save completely them that draw near unto God through him."

The Christian evolutionist will not gain much advantage in any of these directions. Far be it from me to maintain that he is in duty bound to defend everything which foolish opponents or more foolish advocates have said about the Biblical miracles. Far be it from me to deny any of its rights to Biblical criticism. But the conflict between naturalism and supernaturalism is not

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to be avoided by any evasions or compromises. It is as old as religious thought. The church inherited it. Nor will it cease till time ceases. It is for the Christian evolutionist to bear himself bravely in it, after choosing his positions with intelligence.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CRUELTY OF NATURE

It was once held by all its students that Darwinism presents the animal world in a ghastly light. The struggle for life, according to this speculation, is so fierce and so remorseless that only the fittest survive. "Heroic attempts were made," Drummond\* says, "to relieve the strain of the position forced on ethics" by this doctrine. He continues:

"There is," protests Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, "good reason to believe that the supposed 'torments' and 'miseries' of animals have little real existence, but are the reflection of the imagined sensations of cultivated men and women in similar circumstances; and that the amount of actual suffering caused by the struggle for existence among animals is insignificant." Mr. Huxley, on the other hand, will make no compromise. The struggle for life to him is a portentous fact, unmitigated and unexplained. No metaphors are strong enough to describe the implacability of its sway. "The moral indifference of nature" and "the unfathomable injustice of the nature of things" everywhere stare him in the face. "For his successful progress as far as the savage state, man has been largely indebted to those qualities which he shares with the ape and the tiger. . . . For thousands and thousands of years . . . the human

\* The Ascent of Man, p. 20.



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species, like others, plashed and floundered amid the general stream of evolution, keeping its head above water as it best might, and thinking neither of whence nor whither." How, then, does Mr. Huxley act . . . in the face of this tremendous problem? He gives it up. There is no solution. Nature is without excuse.

But Drummond has found a method of alleviation which, he affirms, throws a new and softened light upon the scene. There is no need to join with Wallace in denying the suffering, or with Huxley in execrating it. We may admit it, and yet, on the whole, be thankful for it.

The first Darwinists, so Drummond tells us, strangely neglected one of the most important factors of animal evolution. They pictured the struggle for life, but forgot the struggle for the life of others. An altruistic element is discovered throughout the animal world. It is seen in the care of offspring. The struggle for existence has made it necessary for the parents to feed and defend their young. If it has brought into the world a self-regarding trait, it has brought also an other-regarding trait. This, so far as we know, might have been produced by gentler means, but it has actually been produced by the warfare and starvation which so profoundly perplex both Huxley and Wallace. Thus the moral difficulty disappears. The

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struggle for life has been terrible, but it has given rise to mother love. And this is worth all the frightful cost of pain and death. Moreover, the struggle for life and the struggle for the life of others are both lifted to a high ethical plane, instead of remaining the despair of moralists. "The struggle for the life of others," Drummond writes, "is as deeply sunk in the 'cosmic process' as the struggle for life; the struggle for life has a share in the 'ethical process' as much as the struggle for the life of others. Both are cosmic processes, both are ethical processes; both are cosmical and ethical processes."

Now this lifting of the bloody struggle for life, so unethical in appearance, to the lofty height of spotless righteousness by making it the cause of parental unselfishness, needs to be inspected with care, lest we make too much or too little of it.

1. Drummond blames Darwin for laying emphasis on the struggle for life and ignoring the struggle for the life of others. He blames Huxley for following Darwin in this error. But it is not probable that these great observers and thinkers failed to consider parental altruism in their total estimate of the struggle for life, or to

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give it due weight in their estimate of the ethical problem presented by the doctrine of natural selection. That they attached little ethical value to it may well suggest the question whether Drummond has not attached too much.

But Drummond himself, when he comes to discuss the matter at large, can find nothing ethically admirable in the combined struggle for life and struggle for the life of others in nature below man. In his "Introduction" he commends it, but in his chapter on "The Evolution of a Mother" he forgets his earlier admiration, and remarks the cruelties which constitute the principal part of it. In this larger discussion, "the ethical drama" begins with the birth of the first human babe. Motherhood, which makes the animal world savage, makes the human world gentle. Such is the argument. Now here is one of the chasms which many evolutionists endeavor to cross on bridges of words. Thus Drummond brings together the struggle in the animal world and the struggle in the human world, as one single "cosmic process" and as ethical when thus united. The rapine in the animal world is sanctified by the altruism in the human world which it causes. But that which is distinctly unethical cannot be made to lose its

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abhorrent character by connecting it verbally with the ethical.

2. Drummond stands alone in the supposition that the "ethical drama" began with the first human babe. Other Darwinists without exception, so far as I am acquainted with their writings, teach us that for ages men were as cruel as beasts. Thus Huxley writes: "For his successful progress as far as the savage state, man has been largely indebted to those qualities which he shares with the ape and the tiger." John Fiske states the matter no less strongly: "Those most successful primitive men from whom civilized peoples are descended, must have excelled in treachery and cruelty, as in quickness of wit and strength of will." It would seem that the drama was distinctly unethical for many centuries after the birth of the first babe. How could it have been ethical, if Darwinism be true? For the doctrine requires us to see in the first man an object not distinguishable by observation from the beasts which brought him into the world.

3. That the care of the animal for its young is not an ethical process in any proper sense is evident from the fact that it produces no ethical result. The mother bird is not concerned to

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give to the world a bird that shall be benevolent and just. Her sole care is to protect it from its enemies and to teach it the arts of getting a living. There is no instance within the limits of the world below man of an ethical conviction, an ethical impulse, an ethical desire. No animal corrects either itself or its offspring for moral faults.

4. Nor must we forget the further fact that the animal teaches its offspring its own cunning and cruelty, and thus perpetuates and multiplies the treachery and carnage of nature. The young inherit the ruthless passions of their parents, and also go to school to their parents. They are eager learners. The fox is doubly a thief and the tiger doubly a murderer for the lessons they received from their parents.

5. The struggle for life in the animal world is rendered far more dreadful by the struggle for the life of others. A hen wandering through a field with her brood will sacrifice a thousand living beings to nourish them. The mother robin brings to her nest an incredible number of living beings in a single day. The larger part of the slaughter committed by nature is slaughter for the sustenance of the young.

6. The struggle for the life of others in the animal world does not build up a sympathetic

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character in the parents which engage in it. The mother bird is not taught by her love of her young to be careful of the young of other mothers. She will destroy them at the first opportunity. I once guarded for several days the nest of a pair of jays from a cat which was eager to climb the tree in which it was built. I became well acquainted with them, and they seemed to appreciate my efforts and without protest allowed me to draw near and watch their care for their brood. The day after the fledglings had left the nest I saw their mother quietly tear in pieces and devour a young bird of a weaker species which she had caught.

7. There have been human beings with this kind of altruism, but we have not discovered anything ethically noble in them. The father who loves his children so fondly that he maintains them by robbery and murder and who teaches them to maintain themselves in the same manner, thus enlarging indefinitely the theater of pillage and carnage, is not praised as an example of morality.

On the whole, I do not find much gain from the theory of evolution when I attempt to interpret the cruelty of nature. Calderwood \* may

\* *Evolution and Man's Place in Nature*, p. 6.

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well say that "biology is fruitful of ethical perplexities." I do not wholly sympathize with John Fiske,\* who tells us in one place that "all animals shun danger, and natural selection maintains this rule by the pitiless slaughter of all delinquents, of all in whom the needful inherited tendencies are too weak," and in another praises this same pitiless natural selection which slaughters the weak majority for the sake of the favored minority, as "a creative work that has been ineffably beautiful and marvelous in all its myriad stages." I do not wholly sympathize with him when his admiration of natural selection causes him to look upon the "universal warfare of primeval man" as a part of it, and as inevitable, rather than wicked. "The conditions of the struggle for existence," he tells us, "were not yet visibly changed from what they had been from the outset in the animal world. That struggle meant everlasting slaughter, and the fiercest races of fighters would be just the ones to survive and perpetuate their kind. Those most successful primitive men, from whom civilized peoples are descended, must have excelled in treachery and cruelty, as in quickness of wit and strength of will. That

\* *Life Everlasting*, p. 27; *The Destiny of Man*, p. 118.

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moral sense which makes it seem wicked to steal and murder was scarcely more developed in them than in tigers and wolves.' If I am compelled to accept all this as true, I will not accept it as ethically beautiful.

Fiske has said that, while the cruelty of nature creates an ethical difficulty on any view of it which we may take, it is less objectionable since the process of natural selection has been discovered than it was before. I shall now maintain, on the contrary, that the earlier writers, who knew nothing of natural selection, were able to alleviate the ethical difficulty as the Darwinists cannot, or at least do not.

1. They could represent the animal world as full of pleasure. They did not shut their eyes to its pain, but they maintained that its pleasure was far greater. They observed that even those races which seem to have been created for the food of stronger races enjoy their existence so much that the brief pang of death by violence need not greatly diminish the satisfaction with which we contemplate them as they feed and toil and rest and sport and rear their young. Animals, they observed, are not burdened with care; they are not greatly exposed to sickness; they have no sin and no remorse and no fear of



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a future judgment; nor does death loom before them like a portentous cloud.

2. The earlier writers, when they turned from the pleasure of the animal world to its pain, gave reasons for the supposition that this is not so severe as we picture it. We lend it the lurid colors of our imagination, and invest it with a horror which no animal can appreciate. Animals are not capable of horror; that is the awful prerogative of man. The larger part of our suffering arises from our ability to measure it, to understand it, to paint it in pictures, and to forecast its consequences. But no animal can do any of these things.

3. The older writers pointed to death in the animal world as necessary to keep its population within limits. They were Malthusians to this extent. The parents, they said, must pass away in order to give room for the children. This law secures the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers. Nature must be destructive in order to be conservative. Her destructiveness is an evidence of her kindness, rather than of her cruelty.

4. These earlier writers reminded us, again, that if destruction must be wrought in order to secure the greatest happiness, it may as well be

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wrought by carnivorous animals as by any other agency. Perhaps the deer seized by the lion suffers less than the deer left by the herd to die of disease or age. Nor should we fail, in our pity of the victim, to observe the pleasure of the victor.

5. The earlier writers could weigh the importance of the varied dispositions manifested in the animal world as means of educating the human race. Animals give us our symbols of rapacity, of cunning, of filthiness, of sensuality, as of gentleness, of love, and of fidelity. The animal world mirrors the human in such a way as to instruct it. The parent and the teacher, in training children, appeal to the examples of the tiger, the fox, the pig, the ape, the horse, the lamb, the dog. Nor are there many men or women who fail to admonish themselves by these examples. The pedagogical influences derived from the cruelty of nature are beyond our power of estimation. They are so universal and so perpetual that we are prone to forget them, as we forget the air which we breathe.

6. The earlier writers frankly confessed that these suggestions are inadequate to solve the ethical difficulty, and do but serve to make it less perplexing. They closed by placing it

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among the problems to be completely solved only in the future world, where, we are assured, our knowledge shall be greatly extended. When the solution shall be found, they said, it will be consistent with all that we have learned of the justice of God and of his love for all his creatures. In leaving it thus in the region of mystery with the utmost confidence that the solution will show it to be consistent with all that we know of God, they proceeded with scientific caution, and also with scientific assurance. Darwin frankly confessed that he was profoundly ignorant of the causes of variation within the limits of species. But he also expressed the conviction that when we shall learn these causes they will be found consistent with all that we know of nature as a system of causes and effects. All Darwinists to-day repeat these statements. So the earlier writers on the problem of pain in the animal world left it but partially explained, in the confident expectation that it will ultimately be found harmonious with the righteousness and tenderness of God, and indeed but expressions of these attributes.

7. Finally, these writers availed themselves of the divine assurance that the suffering approaches its end. They quoted the words of

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the apostle Paul in Rom. 8:19, "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who hath subjected it, in hope that the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." If we interpret this into our modern thought, it teaches us that when we contemplate the sufferings of the animal world, we see but a small segment of the line. This is drawn in red. But the vast stretch which lies beyond our vision is white, and it continues forever. How the promise shall be fulfilled we do not know; but we are as certain that it will be kept as we are that "God cannot lie."

If now it is asked in what respects the Darwinists increase the ethical difficulty presented to us by the cruelty of nature, I may answer by citing three characteristics of their teaching.

1. The great majority of them entirely ignore these alleviations. So far as I know, Wallace is the only writer among them who ventures into this fairer region of thought. The other writers of the school avoid it, and thus deprive the Christian evolutionist of much that should be

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precious to him. The motives which impel them to this course will be apparent in a moment.

2. Not only do they neglect these alleviations, but they studiously paint the sufferings of the animal world in the most repulsive colors. It is necessary for them to dwell on the destructiveness of natural selection in order to believe that it has wrought the transmutation of species and produced early man. So great a task could not be accomplished by weak measures. To minds already sore with the contemplation of suffering in the animal world, these extreme portrayals of it bring only increased moral perplexity. These minds revolt when they are commanded to see nothing but moral loveliness in

Nature red in tooth and claw.

They are not able to understand how the Christian evolutionist can glow with enthusiasm for carnage and starvation.

3. The Darwinists offer a solution of the problem which only increases the difficulty. The older writers, as we have seen, left the problem somewhat alleviated, and yet unsolved, in the assurance that the full solution, when it should be reached, would be consistent with all that we know of God as just and tender and

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merciful. The Darwinists take it at once out of this region of partial mystery and offer us a complete explanation. Drummond and Fiske demand that we be charmed with the ethical beauty of that which they have discovered. But the solution shocks the mind unaffected with a scientific fashion of thought. We may accept it if it shall be proved, but the Christian Darwinist will confess that it was unwelcome at first, and finally resulted in a changed conception of God and a doubt whether indeed "his tender mercies are over all his works." He is compelled to think of God as less pitiful than he had supposed.

## CHAPTER XIII

### PROVIDENCE

Perhaps no doctrine of our religion has been more profoundly affected by the discussions concerning evolution than that of providence. "The doctrine of providence," wrote Kahnis \* in 1864, "has never been the subject of dogmatic controversy in the church." This statement, made not two generations ago, is no longer true. In order to measure the change, it will be well for us to glance briefly, but in some detail, at the doctrine as it has been held in the past.

I. In its accepted confessional form, it looks toward the universe as a whole. In reference to this aspect, providence "is that continuous agency of God," writes Dr. Augustus H. Strong,† "by which he makes all the events of the physical and moral universe fulfil the original design with which he created it." Thus it is affirmed that he cares for all his works, however great or however small in the scale of being.

\* System der Lutherischen Dogmatik, p. 271.

† Systematic Theology, p. 207.

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2. The doctrine looks toward the individual. Here I may quote from Luther: \* “I believe that God has created me and all that exist; that he has given and still preserves to me my body and soul with all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with my raiment, food, home and family; that he daily provides me abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me and guards me against all evil; all of which he does out of pure, paternal, and divine goodness and mercy.”

3. The doctrine singles out certain marked events in the history of the individual, the family, the nation, the race, and calls them special providences.

4. The doctrine includes all afflictions, from the lightest grief of a babe to the horrors of shipwreck, of famine, of plague, of conflagration, of war.

5. The doctrine has reference to external influences of a wholesome spiritual and moral nature, such as the instruction of parents and teachers, the translating of the Scriptures, and the preaching of the gospel.

6. The doctrine has reference to internal

\* Small Catechism, Part Two, Art. One.



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events, such as the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Spirit, the mystic communication of strength to the weak and wavering suppliant, and all the countless divine suggestions and invigorations imparted directly to the follower of Christ to enable him to overcome temptation and remain steadfast.

7. The doctrine has reference to human sin, and affirms that God, for reasons infinitely wise and kind, has determined not to prevent it by an act of sovereign power, but, while suffering it, to overrule it for the good of those who trust him in love, even though it may do them temporary injury.

To sum up what has been said. The doctrine as it has been taught affirms that in this entire vast region, with the exception of the wills of intelligent creatures, God controls all that takes place. Natural forces, second causes, have their sphere of action; in the main they are uniform; yet they are subject to the great First Cause, and are not seldom turned hither and thither by him.

In reference to the wills of intelligent creatures the doctrine affirms (1) That God is not a compelling cause of their decisions; (2) That he seeks to influence them by reasonable and lofty motives and by internal aid granted to those

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who will admit it; (3) That decisions contrary to the law of righteousness he determines not to prevent by such exercises of power as would annul the freedom of moral choice, but rather to overrule them for the advancement of his kingdom; and (4) That he foresees these rebellious decisions, and takes them into his plans for the future, so that they do not hinder him from governing the universe for good to all the good.

That the entire universe was regarded as in this sense under the reign of God is seen in the doctrine called technically that of "concurrency." Its history begins with Thomas Aquinas, and his teaching was accepted by the later Roman Catholic schoolmen and was inherited in modified forms by the Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anglican divines. Its design was to assert the reality of second causes in nature, and at the same time to assert the supremacy of God in nature and over nature. It affirms that he concurs with them, but not in mere assent to their course, as the silent partner in a firm concurs with the active partners. It affirms that he permits them to run on undisturbed so long as they fulfil his will, merely sustaining them in this; but further, that he turns them in one direction or another whenever it becomes neces-

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sary to do so in order to accomplish any of his desires. Many theologians distinguished three grades of concurrence: 1. That of mere support; 2. That of a more special kind, in which God guides the forces of nature toward some particular end which he wishes to secure; and 3. That of the most special kind, in which he appears as an immediate cause, and works miracles, yet neither violating nor employing the laws of nature. These distinctions have been preserved in some systems of Lutheran theology till our own days.\*

Calvin did not recognize these grades of concurrence. Since the central and determinative point in his thought was the will of God, second causes played but a minor part in his system, where they are inextricably confused with the First Cause, who often commands them to operate irregularly in order to manifest his supremacy to his people. "Respecting things inanimate," he writes,† "it must be admitted that though they are all naturally endued with their peculiar properties, yet they exert not their power any further than as they are directed by the present hand of God; and they are therefore no more

\* They are justified by Kahnis, *System der Lutherischen Dogmatik*, p. 275.

† Institutes, Book I., chap. xvi, sec. ii.

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than instruments, into which God infuses as much energy as he pleases, bending and turning them to any actions according to his will. . . . Nothing is more natural than the succession of spring to winter, of summer to spring, and of autumn to summer. But there is so great diversity and inequality discovered in this series that it is obvious that every year, month, and day is governed by a new and particular providence."

I ask the reader to observe the extreme form in which the doctrine of immanence appears in this statement. With the older theologians the doctrine of providence had its foundation in the doctrine of immanence.

It was under the influence of such views as these that our forefathers won their heroic battles. They were not often intimidated, for the whole universe was ready to defend them whenever God might wish to wield it in their behalf. No suffering was too great, because pain, as well as pleasure, was his obedient minister. Death could not harm them, because it could come only when he permitted it or directly commissioned it, and never by an event which he would consider an accident.

The change is enormous from these warm beliefs to the chilly admissions of the typical

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Christian evolutionist. There are Christian evolutionists who hold that God has intervened in the formative periods of the history of the universe, and yet hesitate to admit that he intervenes to-day in any manner in the orderly course of cause and effect in the physical world or in the activities of vegetable or animal life. It is with some reluctance that they recognize his immediate agency in the hearts of men.

In order that we may measure still better the extent of the change, let us observe for a moment the distinction between general and special providences. The Christian evolutionist would say at once that general providences are administered to us by the laws of the universe, with which God does not often interfere. They are such events as furnish to us the things necessary for our physical, mental, spiritual, and moral wellbeing, in return for our temperance, prudence, industry, and prayer. We have but to expend a proper measure of thought and toil and devotion in order to secure them from the universe, or from God through the universe. With this doctrine of general providences the Christian evolutionist will find no difficulty, for he sees God in the universe and accepts from God what he accepts from the universe.

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But there are special providences. Those who trust God experience much of trial, and many signal deliverances from trial, as well as much of minute and unobtrusive attention to their innocent preferences and desires, like children in their home and under the care of their parents. These Christians learn to go forward in the service of God depending on both general and special providences. But now, what are special providences, philosophically defined? Do they differ, as to their causes, from general providences? If general providences are ministered to us through the universe, are special providences ministered in the same manner? Or does God add something to the universe when they occur? If he does, is his intervention supernatural, in the ordinary sense of the word, so that the event must be regarded as miraculous? Or has he a way of adding something to the universe without producing miracles?

Many of the older theologians said that general providences are produced under concurrence of the first grade, special providences under concurrence of the second grade, and miracles under concurrence of the third and highest grade. They distinguished thus between general and special providence, and between special

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providences and miracles. But the great majority of recent theologians deny that there is any real objective distinction between general and special providences, and affirm that the distinction is wholly subjective. To the Christian, they say, a natural event constitutes a special providence when it occurs opportunely to deliver him from some pressing danger or to supply some urgent necessity. Thus Dr. E. H. Johnson\* tells us that "the name of special providence is generally restricted to a conspicuous show of divine care, but represents no distinction except of impressiveness." Dodge† records the same opinion: "We may say that every event which signally favors the right and signally rebukes the wrong is a special providence." Strong‡ declares that a special providence "is special, not as respects the means which God makes use of, but as respects the effect produced upon us." Perhaps not all the recent theologians who deny the essential distinction between general and special providences would call themselves evolutionists, but they write in the atmosphere of the doctrine of evo-

\* Outline of Systematic Theology, p. 108.

† Christian Theology, p. 150.

‡ Systematic Theology, p. 215.

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lution, and illustrate its influence even more clearly when they reject it than when they accept it.

I may sum up the disadvantages of Christian evolutionists in three particulars:

1. In general they give great emphasis to the reign of law, and are reluctant to admit that God interferes with it in any manner.

2. If they are Darwinists, as they usually are, they give great emphasis to the cruelty of this reign, and to the remorseless and world-wide slaughter which takes place under it. They observe that man, not less than the beast, is compelled to struggle desperately, and to perish if he is weak.

3. They see themselves confronted by the universe, now gentle and now heartless, rather than by a God whose name is Abba, Father.

4. It results from these disadvantages that the Christian experience of thoughtful people is much less confident and joyful than it was fifty years ago. They may anticipate the final salvation of all souls. But the conditions of salvation have become harsher, and the road to it darker. They have fallen from the summer of grace to the winter of works. The future world will give



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them ample alleviations, but this world has become less genial and more glacial.\*

There are several directions in which the Christian evolutionist may seek an escape from this wintry climate of thought.

1. He may try to hold that there are no second causes, and that all events are compelled by the immediate agency of the divine will. I have discussed this doctrine elsewhere, and have shown that it leads to mental and religious confusion. But, in any case, it can afford little relief. It merely exchanges a law which operates uniformly, for a God who operates uniformly; a universe which will not turn out of its way to avoid a prostrate man, for a God who will not turn out of his way to avoid a prostrate man. Only by a return to the older doctrine that the God who causes all events will vary the processes of the universe to suit the desires and necessities of his people can the Christian evolutionist find this doctrine useful to him. But in that case, would he not cease to be an evolutionist, even if he continued to call himself by the name? Would this perpetual reign of the

\* I wish to except from this statement such optimists as Drummond, who discover "ineffable beauty" even in the horrors of natural selection.

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supernatural admit of evolution in any proper sense of the word?

2. The Christian evolutionist might dwell on the excellence of natural selection, which puts danger and difficulty in the path of all in order to increase the strength of the strong, and crushes the weak that the strong may transmit their strength to future generations and thus improve the race. A Professor of biology once told me that men who go down in the struggle of life ought to rejoice in their destruction, because they ought to appreciate the beauty of the system which causes it. This is somewhat like the doctrine of Hopkins that all true Christians should be willing to suffer in hell forever if God so ordains. A great number persuaded themselves that they accomplished this heroic self-surrender; and it is possible that the evolutionist may content himself with a providence which breaks him in pieces and grinds him into powder for the sake of future generations.

3. The Christian evolutionist might adopt a theory of preëstablished harmony. The human will is free, but God foreknows all its decisions. He foresees all the wants of every person, whether physical, mental, or spiritual. In creating the universe and endowing it with its forces

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he so arranged it that every person should find in it the supply of every need at the proper moment. Its laws are unchangeable, but they have been so constituted in the beginning that they bring to every person what he needs when he needs it. Such a preëstablished harmony is not beyond the resources of infinite power guided by infinite wisdom and impelled by infinite love. A faint symbol of it may be found in the labor of certain insects to provide beforehand for the young which they will never see, as the wasp stores up food to be eaten by its offspring long after it is dead. A faint symbol of it may be seen also in the ingenuity of the mechanic who constructs a clock which will render the service demanded of it a thousand years in the future.

4. Or, again, the Christian evolutionist may take refuge in the conviction that, while God does not intervene in the processes of the physical universe, he communicates directly with the soul. In general, Christian evolutionists are not ready to deny this, though they may assume a critical attitude towards the familiar doctrine of regeneration by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit, and may think of salvation as the education of that which the soul already pos-

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sesses, rather than as the implanting of a new life. But now, if God leaves open a door of approach to the soul, he may suggest to the soul such adjustments to the events of the physical world as may seem to him desirable, and may enable it to adapt itself wisely to the course of the universe, so as to avoid danger and fulfil its mission. But if the soul needs chastisement, God may withhold such suggestions. This would be not unlike the divine guidance for which we daily pray. We might not distinguish our own thoughts from those which God sends, for new thought often seems to come to us from without, and among our most familiar experiences is that of what the poets call inspiration, "the divine efflatus," because it appears to be a gift to the mind rather than a product of the mind. This illusion of thought is the basis of the fable of the nine muses.

5. The Christian evolutionist may dwell on the bounty of the universe as it is constituted under the reign of natural law. Day and night, winter and summer, storm and calm, seed time and harvest, friends, schools, the family, the church; these, it may be said, are in themselves a sufficient providence for those who will reach

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forth their hands and take. No intervention is needed; the table is spread, and all are invited to it.

This is the view which the majority of writers who are strongly influenced by the doctrine of evolution now bring forward with special emphasis. It is the theme of "The Providential Order of the World," by the late Professor A. B. Bruce, D.D., a book much used in our divinity schools. Dr. Bruce occupies one hundred and fifty of his pages in the effort to show, not that there is a divine providence, but that there may be one without any diminution of the dignity and worthiness of God, considering the powers and capabilities of man. He surrenders everything to the evolutionist. He will not even say that God must have put forth a special determination in order to start the universe upon its path. Nor will he say that the origin of life required a special determination, but thinks it possible that those are right who derive it from physical forces acting in an exceptional environment, yet under the conditions of uniform law. He makes the same heroic admission with reference to the origin of the human soul. He then endeavors to save a fragment of ground on which to erect his doctrine of providence by bringing forward

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the doctrine of immanence. Every atom of the universe is quivering with divine energy. This would seem to deny the reality of natural forces and second causes. But no; there is everywhere an unbroken sequence of causation by means of natural forces. These two conceptions are connected by a bridge of words on which the faith of the unwary reader may cross, but on which reason dare not set its foot.

But further. The reign of physical causation is not inconsistent with the reign of providence.

We are not to think of the providential order and the physical order as dividing the universe between them, the one here at certain critical points in the world's history, the other there where things run in accustomed groves. They are different aspects of the same universe. All is mechanism, and all is purpose. . . . There is no need to displace physical causation to make room for providence.\*

This is another bridge of words. It may console our faith to hear that

All's law and all's love,

but reason demands something beyond the mere statement. It asks, "How can these things be?" and it finds no answer. Yet the book was written for the purpose of aiding the reason. The Biblical doctrine of providence soars on two

\* P. 232.

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wings above the tribulations of the world. The first is the assurance that the providence of God is usually administered through natural law. The second is the assurance that God is not in bondage to natural law, but can work as he pleases, through natural law or without natural law. Now Bruce gives us a doctrine with one wing broken, and hence incapable of flight above the universe. We may be thankful that he has reminded us once more of the bounties which the universe offers us. Yet it remains true that every man is afraid of what the universe may do to him if it finds him asleep for a moment, or even in his hours of greatest vigilance; and that he values the doctrine of providence largely because it tells him of a power more royal and a love more tender than the universe.\*

6. The Christian evolutionist may believe in the reign of law and also in the reign of a providence in law and beyond law, without attempting to reconcile the two doctrines. He may

\*The book on which I am here commenting belongs to an extensive literature that may be called apologetic apologetics. This literature forever holds its hat in its hand, and forever bows to objectors of all kinds, and forever thanks them for claiming so much, and forever grants them all that they claim, and forever begs them to claim more. Our world is abundantly supplied with it, and our younger ministers feed upon it. I counsel them to become acquainted with it. But I also counsel them to abandon it. The first requisite to their success is the strong assertion of the divine in the world and over the world. The church and the human race have suffered long enough from the lamb-like instruction of this literature.

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believe the first on the testimony of scientific men, and the second on the testimony of the Scriptures and of Christian experience, and wait for further light. This is probably his attitude towards the doctrines of divine sovereignty and of human freedom; he believes both without discovering their logical connection. All our knowledge, of whatever kind, consists largely of mountain peaks separated by valleys full of shadow and mist. This attitude might restore to the Christian evolutionist much of the peace and joy which he has lost in his contemplation of the universe as an adamant system of laws, or as a structure governed from within by an adamant God who has certain fixed habits of action to which he adheres stubbornly, even when his heart is melting with pity.



## CHAPTER XIV

### RELIGIONS

The untheistic evolutionist regards all religions as the products of the human spirit. They are all erroneous, though some are loftier than others. Religious belief is a necessary step in the evolution of the human race. The mystery of the universe once rendered a theory of supernatural powers essential to the satisfaction of the mind. But the mystery is now solved. All is law. We no longer need the religious hypothesis. We shall best conquer the evils of the world by the scientific study of them and by the application of scientific remedies to them. We need no further appeals to eternal rewards and punishments. Such is usually the untheistic view.

Many Christian evolutionists, on the other hand, are unwilling to regard any religion as the product of the human spirit. They substitute for the untheistic view the exact opposite. They declare that all religions are the products of the divine spirit. Christianity is the highest, but all are in a measure the offspring of inspira-

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tion, while at the same time all are in a measure defective and erroneous. It was possible for God to give us a perfect religion; but he has preferred to work through imperfect men, and the results, at best, partake the imperfection of the medium.

Let us now test this claim of many Christian evolutionists that all the religions of the world are the products of the divine spirit working through men, and that all are in some measure divine.

Here, if we would think clearly, we must distinguish between philosophy and religion. The Christian evolutionist, when he praises what are called the ethnic religions, and places them in the same class with the Mosaic and the Christian, may be thinking of philosophy, rather than of religion. Philosophy had no more to do with the established religions of the Gentile world than the essays of John Foster and Matthew Arnold had to do with the established religion of Great Britain. The Gentile religions were the institutions of the priesthoods, the temples, the oracles, and the mysteries, with the associated mythology and worship.

Moreover, when the Christian evolutionist substitutes philosophy for religion and calls it

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divine, he takes it at its best in such men as Socrates and Plato, and in the pale but rich afterglow of Cicero, of Plutarch, of Epictetus, and of Marcus Aurelius. He loves to imagine the ancient Greek and Latin worlds as full of such men. But the philosophers, as a class, were far inferior to these illustrious thinkers, both in intellect and morals. The earliest philosophers speculated about the world, rather than about God and duty. "The Ionian philosophy," says Holm,\* writing of the second half of the fifth century before Christ, "had confined itself to explaining the phenomena of nature." Then came the period of rhetoric and sophistry. The rhetoricians and sophists gained a reputation as jugglers with words, splitters of hairs, capable of confusing and puzzling, but not of enlightening. "They maintained," says Holm, "that the essence of wisdom resided in beautiful language reposing on a foundation of ingenious thought. They owed their enormous success with the people to the fact that they instilled into it the belief that their instruction would ensure every man practical ability in every walk of life. . . . Of the leaders of the movement, those who called themselves rhetoricians pro-

\* The History of Greece, vol. II., p. 424 ff.

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fessed to teach oratory; those who aspired to the name of sophists, wisdom. In both instances the aim was ability in practical life, and the difference between the two was rather of theoretical than practical importance. . . . The chief point of both was dexterity. . . . Knowledge of the subject was relegated by both to a subordinate position. The result was that not only did rhetoric devote itself more to the semblance than the reality, . . . but that sophistry, also, . . . came to be regarded as the science which qualified its adepts, not to produce conviction, but to dazzle and stupefy the public." Then came the great period of Socrates and Plato, when God and duty were often made the subjects of earnest discussion. Some of the best work done by both these men consisted in their opposition to the sophists. We should err, however, if we supposed that they transformed the philosophy of Greece, for in fact it fell lower after they died than it had been before. "Almost all these philosophical schools," writes Holm,\* "had deviated widely from the spirit of Socrates. The idea of Socrates had been to teach men to bethink them of their duties and to act after mature consideration; but

\*The History of Greece, vol. IV., p. 144.

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the Academics and Peripatetics engaged in learned investigations. . . . To the bulk of mankind, who had no desire for erudition, this was of little use, and that was especially regrettable in an age when religion was becoming more and more unsettled. . . . The Socratics were anything but what their name implied." Then came the well known schools of the Stoics and Epicureans, with their impractical theories of life. It is evident from this unprejudiced review that the philosophers in general are not to be admired as teachers of religion.

But let us not hesitate to examine philosophy at its best in such representatives of it as Socrates and Plato, and to ask whether it is worthy of God, and whether we must assume a special divine influence in order to account for it. When we have completed the task we shall conclude with reluctance that the purest and highest of the philosophers condemned almost none of the great evils which ate the life out of ancient civilization and brought it to ruin.

No philosopher condemned slavery, though its horrors were beyond our conception. Ancient slavery oppressed chiefly white persons, energetic, hardy, ambitious, quick to learn; and it seemed to the masters necessary to keep them

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in subjection by the sternest measures. In Greece the slave population far exceeded the free in numbers. In Attica, at one period, there were 20,000 citizens and 400,000 male slaves. In Sparta, at one period, there were 36,000 citizens and 244,000 slaves. It is impossible to ascertain the relative proportions of the free and the enslaved in the Roman empire at large. It is probable that the proportion of slaves was greater in the city of Rome than elsewhere. For the period from 146 B.C. to 220 A.D., Blair supposes three slaves in the city to one freeman. Bunsen supposes three slaves to one freeman in the year 5 B.C. The lot of the slaves was not so hard in Greece as in Rome; yet even there they were treated with systematic brutality. When they gave testimony in a court of justice they were always subjected to torture. No attractive woman slave could preserve her chastity, and it was the duty of a host, in entertaining a stranger over night, to furnish him with a woman slave. Many slaves worked in the mines in chains. But it was the Roman who reduced the slave to the lowest condition. If now we ask what attitude the best of the philosophers assumed towards this terrible evil, we shall find little evidence of divine enlightenment.

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Here I shall quote the words of Döllinger,\* from whom I have derived many of the facts already stated:

Slavery was the foundation on which the whole social and political life of Greece was based. Doubt as to the equity and advantage of such an arrangement never entered a Greek mind; it was a self-evident case; the idea of another state of things was impossible to conceive. . . . There is no perfect household state, according to Aristotle, that does not consist of slaves and free men. . . . The Stagirite has, in fact, left us a complete theory of slavery as an institution founded in the nature of social order. . . . Philosophers, such as Plato, were against keeping many slaves of the same country and language; they were to be dealt with rigorously and chastised sedulously; mere remonstrances would spoil them. . . . Plato, too, regarded it as one of the marks of an educated man that he despised his slaves.

Nor did any philosopher condemn infanticide, though it destroyed the population of Greece and prepared her to fall an easy prey to the Roman legions, and though later it rendered the same bad service to Rome, and prostrated her before the barbarian hordes of the north. Plato † gives it his sanction. Polybius, § writing in the early period of the Roman dominance in Greece, tells us that the practice depopulated the country.

\* The Gentile and the Jew, vol. II., p. 226.

† The Republic, book V.

§ He died B. C. 125.

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“It is the unanimous opinion of all that Greece now enjoys the greatest prosperity, yet there is such a scarcity of population, and the cities are so desolate, that the soil begins to lose its fertility from want of hands to cultivate it. The reason is that men, even when they live in the married state, will not bring up their children, and this because of their effeminacy, love of comfort, and idleness. At best, they will only rear one or two out of many, in order to leave them a good inheritance. The evil has been gradually becoming greater; for when war or sickness has snatched away the only child, the family dies out of course. This state of things is not to be remedied by recourse to gods or oracles. Men are able to help themselves and ameliorate it by adopting another practice, and where they will not, the law should define that all children who are born shall be brought up.” It must be observed that Polybius condemned this slaughter of the innocents solely on grounds of expediency, and not because it was a crime. The practice prevailed also among the Romans, and was one cause of their destruction. The infants to be rejected in the ancient pagan world were usually “exposed,” that is, left out in an unprotected place, so that any person wishing



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to adopt a child might take his choice of a number thus abandoned to hunger, cold, and wandering beasts. Boys were sometimes picked up to be trained as gladiators; girls, as prostitutes. But the vast majority perished. "How many are there among you," writes Tertullian to the Roman people, "and they, too, in the magistracy, who put an end to their children! You deprive them of the breath of life in water; you suffer them to die of cold or hunger, or to be eaten by dogs."

Neither did any philosopher condemn prostitution. Socrates recommended moderation to the young men whom he influenced, but not abstinence. He visited Theodota, a courtesan, in company with some of them, and gave her advice concerning the best method of gaining and retaining clients. This anecdote is the more significant for my inquiry that it is related in a book \* written to defend his memory from the charge that he was a corruptor of youth.

Nor did any philosopher seek to improve the condition of the wives, the mothers, and the daughters of Greece or Rome. The philosophers ignored or approved the ignorance and subjection of virtuous women, as they ignored

\* Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, iii., 13.

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or approved the association of men with the unvirtuous.

Will the reader pardon me if I bring forward one more of these nauseous indictments, since it is necessary to a right decision of the question now before us. The philosophers in general did not condemn the sexual use of boys. Plato and Epicurus were exceptions to the rule, but Plato came to his hostile attitude only in the *Laws*, his last book, the product of his old age. The prevalence of this moral pestilence is sketched thus by Döllinger: \*

With the Greeks this phenomenon exhibited all the symptoms of a great national disease, a kind of moral pestilence. It showed itself as a passion stronger and more vehement, wilder and more irregular, than the love of woman among other peoples. Infinite jealousy, unconditional self-sacrifice, hot lust, tender toying, night-long vigils at the door of the beloved one, all that makes caricature of the natural love for the female sex was to be found here. The strictest moralists, in pronouncing upon this relation, were excessively indulgent, nay, worse than indulgent, for they often treated it with mere ridicule, tolerating even the society of the guilty. In the whole of the literature of the pre-Christian period there is hardly a writer to be met with who has expressed himself decidedly in terms hostile to it. In very truth, the whole of society was infected with it, and people inhaled the pestilence with the air they breathed. It was glorified by poetry in all its forms. The erotic say-

\* The Gentile and the Jew, vol. ii., p. 238.

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ings or discourses of philosophers contributed to fan the evil flame. . . . In countless passages of poets, orators, and philosophers, where the subject is love, woman's love is not thought of. . . . Socrates himself, who in other respects took a far higher ground, . . . could not forbear feeling like a Greek on this point. Plato, in the *Charmides*, makes him give expression to the strong emotion which he experienced on happening to see a beautiful youth half naked. . . . In such a state of things . . . one may conceive fathers and pedagogues never allowing young boys to enter into conversation with strangers unless before witnesses. This extended even to philosophers, who were fond of attracting beautiful boys and enticing them into such relations. Their reputation in general was so bad in this respect, that, as Plutarch observes, parents commonly would not tolerate their young boys having any acquaintance with philosophers.

The crime did not become prevalent in Rome so early as in Greece. But when at length the Romans adopted it, they added a special vulgarity to it. In Greece, it crowned itself with flowers; in Rome, it cast off all sentiment, and wallowed in the mire of unadorned sensuality. The emperors in general were guilty of it, and we cannot except even the best of them from the charge. Trajan made it memorable in art.

The philosophers looked out upon a world gangrened with such evils as these, and smiled. One might infer that, instead of being aided by the Holy Spirit to detect and condemn sin, they

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were "blinded by the god of this world." Nor did they discover and proclaim any great and revolutionary principle, such as the universal brotherhood of the human race, or the golden rule, which should gradually correct these wrongs.

The philosophers expressed some excellent sentiments concerning God and duty. But when it is claimed that they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, we should ask whether the human mind itself, when possessed of great natural powers and highly educated, is not capable of reaching certain conclusions with reference to religious truth and moral action. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." "The invisible things of him are clearly seen since the creation of the world."

Moreover, there is an innate response in the soul to these teachings of nature. If a genius like Shakespeare had lived in the twilight of the pagan world, and had adopted the cloak of the philosopher, he would have recorded many beautiful thoughts of the Creator, of the universe, of providence, and of virtue. We might justly expect more of this kind from him than we actually get from Socrates and Plato.

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Or perhaps the Christian evolutionist, when he speaks of the ethnic religions as divine, thinks of the poetry of Greece and Rome. Homer and Hesiod were regarded by the Greeks somewhat as we regard the Bible, and Virgil is conspicuous for devoutness. The early Greek tragedies had a religious purpose, and they were played in honor of the gods. Now there are several gross crimes which the gods of Homer will punish. But, on the whole, they aid him who pays them the greatest honor and gives them the greatest offerings, without regard to his morality or his immorality. "Religion," writes Dr. Evelyn Abbott\* of the Homeric age, "is not yet combined with morality, for the gods are not moral beings, nor do men ask their favor always for moral ends. It is rather a means of obtaining prosperity and success by the help of higher powers. . . . Perjury, and injuries done to parents or suppliants or beggars, are visited with divine wrath. But beyond these limitations, the right of the stronger prevails among gods and men." After Homer, the tragedians form a somewhat higher conception of the gods, but without attributing consistent morality to them. In Sophocles "Zeus,"

\* A History of Greece, vol. i., p. 193.

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says Dr. Evelyn Abbott,\* “is the upholder of the eternal laws of justice; he dwells beyond the reach of time in a light ‘which no man may approach unto.’ Zeus is also the lover of Semele and Alcmena, the father of children half human, half divine. The inconsistency of such a presentation of the divine being would be fatal if the dramas of Sophocles were a treatise on theology.” But it is precisely in Sophocles that pagan poetry reaches its highest conception of the divine character. The poets, therefore, are less helpful as religious teachers than Plato, in whom the pagan world produced its consummate flower. If we cannot discover evidence of divine intervention in pagan philosophy, still less can we hope to discover it in pagan epic and tragedy.

But pagan philosophy and poetry, after all, do not constitute the pagan religions, which have their proper expressions in the priesthoods, the temples, the oracles, the mysteries, and the mythologies. Turning now to the religions properly so called, and examining them without prejudice, we must hear with incredulity the statement that they are divine. What single feature of their mythologies, of their doctrines.

\* *Hellenica*. A Collection of Essays. P. 33.

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or of their rites, can claim divine origin without a blush?

Shall we say that polytheism was divine, which shattered the sun into a thousand stars, so that men wandered in the night from the cradle to the grave? Shall we say that idolatry was divine, which taught "that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and the device of man," or to monstrous shapes of "four-footed beasts and creeping things of the earth?" Shall we say that the mythologies were divine, which commanded the purest and best to adore impersonations of all the vices and crimes which pruriency, greed, cruelty, and cunning, have been able to invent? These charges against the pagan religions are the common-places of historical study, and need not be proved, though they need to be remembered.

There are some features of these religions which require more extended discussion.

It has been said that these religions kept alive a sense of sin, and thus quickened the conscience and promoted morality. This opinion is derived from the conviction that they ought to have done so, rather than from any evidence that they actually did so. It is true that they condemned certain crimes. The Greeks be-



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lieved that Zeus would punish murder, incest, and the adultery of the wife. The list of the misdeeds subject to his anger was very short. They were such as create horror in any thoughtful mind, and it needed no revelation to point them out. Those who kept themselves free from a few extreme forms of evil had nothing to fear from the moral character of the gods, and did not subject themselves to self-examination or self-accusation. The mass of the Greek people, who did not believe themselves gross criminals, found no revelation of sin in this feature of their religion. On the contrary, it would lead them to satisfaction with themselves.

But further. The ethnic religions have something to say about sin as distinguished from crime. The Vedic hymns and the Babylonian psalms are often quoted to show the overwhelming sense of sin created in the hearts of those who sang them. It is easy to make extracts from them which read well when placed beside the penitential psalms of the Old Testament. But the impartial student of these hymns and psalms will establish a contrast, rather than a comparison, between their conception of sin and that of the Hebrew psalms. They do not always define the sin which they deplore, and the un-



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wary reader leaps to the conclusion that it is sin in our sense of the word. But wherever they define it he will observe that it is simply a ritual sin. The Hebrew prophets never rebuke ritual sins, but always essential sins. The Hebrew psalmists never deplore ritual sins, but always essential sins. These ethnic hymns and psalms, on the other hand, never deplore essential sins, but always ritual sins. The god is angry because some ceremony has been neglected or performed imperfectly. The worshiper knows this, because he is sick; or his business does not prosper; or his ambitions are crossed. Some god therefore must be angry with him. Often he does not know what god sends the affliction, and he declares himself ready to make amends to any or all, and appeals to the "known or unknown god." Nor can he remember what sacrifice he has omitted or hurried or what temple-tax he has evaded. Yet he is certain that he has sinned against the prescribed ritual of some god, for he is plagued with misfortune. I am not giving an estimate of averages; the distinction is absolute. The sin of the ethnic hymns and psalms, wherever it is specified, is a ritual sin. In other words, it is not sin at all. Thus the conception of sin fostered by the ethnic

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religions was wholly false. Instead of revealing sin, they concealed it by placing before it a screen composed of grievances wholly destitute of moral characteristics.

The teaching of the Vedic hymns is presented thus by an authority on the subject: \*

Ethical considerations are foreign to these instinctive outbursts of the pious mind. Sin and evil, indeed, are often adverted to, and the gods are praised because they destroy sinners and evil-doers; but one would err in associating with these words our notions of sin and wrong. A sinner, in these hymns, is a man who does not address praises to those elementary deities, or who does not gratify them with the oblations they receive at the hands of the believer.

The same conception of sin prevails in the Babylonian psalms. This fact is not yet fully recognized by the writers on comparative religion. I make the statement as the result of my own studies of the translations.

It is well known to all classical scholars that in the Greek hymns the only sin ever recognized is some neglect of the rites appointed in honor of a god.

But, it is said, the contemplation of the gods, and the desire to please them, must have

\* Chambers' Encyclopedia, art. India.

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been elevating in its influence. Now obviously the effect would depend on their character. If they were conceived as righteous beings, it must have benefited the worshiper to think of them and adore them. But if they were examples of all unrighteousness, the effect would be disastrous. We have already seen their character. To worship beings who would not have been permitted to live in any respectable circle of pagan society could not have been wholesome. But furthermore; the design of the worship was debasing. This was simply to flatter the gods, and thus to render them propitious to the secular desires of the worshiper. They were eager for praise; the larger the sacrifices presented to them the greater was their satisfaction with the devotee. They did not demand a good moral character; they demanded hecatombs. The object of true worship is twofold. First, it contemplates a Being replete with all moral perfections, and reproduces his character in the soul, since we tend to become like any character whom we admire. But again, it opens the locked gates of the sinful will to the influx of mystic redemptive reinforcements always granted to those who ask. Pagan worship could not have produced either of these results, since

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it was the contemplation of degraded characters, and since it sought no moral improvement through their grace.

It has not been necessary for me to rest my argument on an appeal to the more abhorrent features of the pagan religions. I have appealed to these religions in their daily dress. But the claim that all religions are divine includes their worst features, as well as their best, and compels me to glance at the darker side. It includes the prostitution in honor of the gods which formed a regular part of the worship in many temples of many lands.\* It includes the human sacrifices with which the altars of Carthage and Mexico reeked, which polluted the expiatory rites of early Greece,† and which lingered in the Roman empire till the time of Julius Cæsar. It cannot be that God is the author of such religions. Or is there no difference, after all, between God and the devil?

I do not think it necessary to study the question of the divine character of Confucianism and Buddhism. If we cannot find God in the religions in which we have already searched for

\* I do not wish to make these pages repulsive with details. The reader can find them in Döllinger, *The Gentile and the Jew*.

† Maury has collected numerous instances of these in his *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce Antique*, vol. i., chap. 2.

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him, we should not find him in these, for they are of lower types and adapted to lower peoples. Nor should we find him in Mohammedanism, which was formed by curtailing a revelation already given in our Scriptures, rather than by seeking additional revelation from above.

It is incredible that God should institute a religion either non-moral or immoral. The only purpose he can have in establishing a religion is the recovery of souls from sin and their confirmation in righteousness. But the pagan religions were non-moral in their best features and immoral in their worst. This is recognized in part by Sayce: \*

The first fact which the historian of religion has to bear in mind is, that religion and morality are not necessarily connected together. The recent history of religion in western Europe, it is true, has made it increasingly difficult for us to understand this fact, especially in days when systems of morality have been put forward as religions in themselves. . . . Religion has to do with a power outside ourselves. . . . The power may also be conceived of as non-moral or even as immoral. The blind law of destiny to which, according to Greek belief, the gods themselves were subject, was necessarily non-moral. . . . It is strength, rather than goodness, that primitive man admires, worships, and fears. . . . We need not wonder, therefore, that in the earliest forms of religion we find little or no traces of the moral element.

\* The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia, p. 6.

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Yet if the pagan religions had been simply non-moral we should not recoil with so great aversion from the sentimental classification of them with the Christian religion as divine, though we should reject it. But when we observe that they were immoral, and that to a hideous degree, it causes us to shudder.

The Bible tells us that the human mind is capable of discovering certain religious truths. It tells us that men "are created in the image of God," that is, with reason, affection, free will, conscience, and self-consciousness, so that they ought to possess both an intellectual and a moral apprehension of him. It tells us that they may readily understand the chief distinctions between right and wrong: "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, so that they are without excuse." It tells us that man is not satisfied in his alienation from God: "What fruit had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed?" We know that there is a strong monistic tendency in the human mind; and it may be said that the history of philosophy is a record of the efforts of the mind to reduce all things to a single element and to trace all phenomena back

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to a single original cause. We know that the doctrine of evolution proceeds largely from this instinctive desire of the mind. We know that the universe is a display of mind, a structure thought out, thought through, planned. We know that each small province of it, each plant, each snow-flake, each rain-drop, exhibits the same intellectual quality. When we consider man in his relation to the world and to duty, we perceive that he ought to have formed a religion for himself, embracing monotheism, and of a high ethical character. Surely he required no celestial inspiration to construct the historic polytheisms, not only destitute of moral excellences, but stained with every moral defect which we can imagine.

But the Biblical writers, though they came into most intimate acquaintance with the pagan religions, have no good thing to say of them. To these holy men, they were connected with the dark realm of evil, and not with the divine spirit. The early church almost perished under the persecutions which their priests commanded and inflamed. It is remarkable, not that they have rendered so much aid to the soul in its combat with sin, but that they have prevented it from beholding its sins, and have set before it

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as objects of adoration, the extreme embodiments of sin. They have darkened, as with studious intention, the testimony of the universe concerning God and the testimony of the conscience concerning sin and duty. The virtues of the pagan world, which we must not fail to recognize and admire, came from the light of reason and conscience, and not from the darkness of its religions.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE FUTURE

We saw in a preceding section that many Christian evolutionists tend to deny a future of permanent suffering for any man, however wicked in this life. I proceed now to consider with some care the relations which they seek to establish between this denial and the doctrine of evolution.

There are two of these relations, and Christian evolutionists are divided concerning them, some confiding in one, and some in the other.

I. There are those who seek to construct an eschatology out of the doctrine of natural selection. Natural selection was named by Herbert Spencer "the survival of the fittest." Dr. Martineau, led astray by the possible moral implication of the word "fittest," named the process "the survival of the best." Those who find their eschatology in the process of natural selection are led astray in the same manner, and turn "the survival of the fittest" into "the survival of the best." They affirm that men who are morally fit to survive death will survive

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it, while men who are not morally fit to survive will pass out of existence. Those who are morally worth preserving will be preserved, and those who are not morally worth preserving will cease to exist. This doctrine is much like that of conditional immortality. Its advocates consider it especially cogent, since they suppose that it rests upon a basis of scientific fact, or at least of scientific analogy.

But the basis is only a phrase, and a phrase misunderstood. It was difficult to find a brief phrase which would express the doctrine of natural selection. The doctrine affirms, among other things, that the animal best adapted to its environment will be best able to get a living, to survive, and to transmit its advantages to its offspring. It is a question of adaptation, of adjustment. But the animal adjusted to its environment is fitted to its environment, and the best adjusted is the best fitted. This was the thought which gave rise to the phrase "the survival of the fittest." The phrase conveys no faintest suggestion of moral fitness.

It could not suggest moral fitness, for the process of natural selection, as it is presented to us by all those who consider it an important factor in the evolution of life, is not moral. In-

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deed, one can hardly control the impulse to denounce it as immoral. Turn back to my chapter on the cruelty of nature, and observe again that, according to the doctrine of natural selection, she has set a high premium on cunning, hypocrisy, lying, robbery, poisoning, and slaying, and has slowly climbed upward on a stairway choked with the victims of deceit, greed, rapine, and starvation. Drummond and John Fiske depict these horrors as clearly as any other writers, and then term the process one of "ineffable beauty." But we cannot sweeten it with any such treacle of words.

Turning now to the theological aspect of the doctrine, we perceive that it affords no ground to hope that the morally fit shall survive and the morally unfit become extinct. It teaches precisely the contrary. It is not my province here to condemn or to approve the doctrine of conditional immortality. I limit myself to the duty of showing that the doctrine of natural selection gives it no support.

II. The larger number of the Christian evolutionists turn from the doctrine of natural selection, as affording them no hope, to the doctrine of universal progress, which they suppose to be a constituent element of the doctrine of evolu-

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tion. They seek in the doctrine of evolution a warrant for the belief that all souls are destined forever to advance in holiness. They seek in it a warrant to disregard the Biblical predictions concerning a resurrection of the body and a final judgment. They seek in it a warrant to disregard the Biblical predictions of a final catastrophe in which the earth shall be burned. They seek in it a warrant to anticipate that human beings will continue forever to be born and to die in this world, that Christ will return only spiritually, in the ever-increasing tide of good will among men, and that there will be no termination of his kingdom here below in its present form.

In discussing these chirrupings I shall not take them up in their order, but shall show in a general way that the doctrine of evolution, far from justifying them, spreads a pall of darkness over the future of the human race in this world, and of this world itself.

1. The doctrine of universal progress is both affirmed and denied by the majority of those who teach evolution from the standpoint of physical science. It is affirmed in such definitions of evolution as those which I have quoted in the second section of this book. Le Conte

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says, "A continual progressive change;" and Huxley, "In all this vast progression;" and Herbert Spencer, "The class of phenomena to be considered under the title of evolution is in a great measure coextensive with the class commonly indicated by the word progress." Scientific writers tend to identify evolution with progress when they speak of it in general terms and with enthusiasm. But, when they bring to us detailed studies of the manner in which it has proceeded and is destined to proceed, they testify that it presents darker aspects.

In fact, it has been attended with vast movements of retrogression and degradation. Le Conte \* reduces the phenomena of retrogression to a general law: "At the close of an age the characteristic dominant principle or class declines, but does not perish. It only becomes subordinate to the succeeding dominant class or principle. . . . So it is also in geologic history." He gives us a diagram to illustrate the ascent and decline of four great forms of animal life below man; mollusks, fishes, reptiles, and mammals. Nor is the decline which he brings before us one of numbers; on the contrary, it is a decline of power, a degradation of the type.

\* Elements of Geology, fourth ed., p. 291.

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Huxley,\* though he does not dwell upon the process, observes it and gives it a name, calling it "retrogressive evolution." Professor Shaler† states the case none too strongly when he says, "It is a common supposition that the direction of the movement is ever upward. The fact is that in a large number of cases, perhaps in the aggregate in more than half, the change gives rise to forms which by all the canons by which we determine relative rank, are to be regarded as regressive and degradational." Wallace‡ also tells us that "we have numerous examples . . . of absolute degradation or degeneration."

It appears that man is not exempt from this possibility of degeneration. Dr. E. Ray Lancaster§ tells us that "the traditional history of mankind furnishes us with notable instances of degeneration." "It is well to remember," he continues, "that we are subject to the general laws of evolution, and are as likely to degenerate as to progress."

I do not know how to reconcile the roseate definitions of evolution given us by the students

\* *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 88.

† *The Interpretation of Nature*, p. 171.

‡ *Darwinism*, p. 120.

§ *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism*. In his *Advancement of Science: Occasional Essays and Addresses*.

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of the physical sciences and these darker declarations concerning the manner in which it has worked; nor am I concerned to do so. I am concerned rather with the fact that the Christian evolutionist has lightly caught up their definitions and turned them into predictions of universal virtue and happiness, and has neglected their demonstrations of the fallacy of their definitions. It appears that the animal world has been endowed with the awful prerogative of free choice, and that more than half its races have fallen from the high privileges which once belonged to them, and have pleased themselves with physical and mental stagnation or retreat both for themselves and their offspring. It appears that no man is assured of progress under the law of evolution. The Christian evolutionist may well pause before he bases his hope for the eternal advancement of all souls on the slippery foundation of this doctrine.

2. The scientific evolutionist foresees the end of the earth itself, produced by its fall into the bosom of the sun. Stewart and Tait\* do but express the universal expectation of those who study the future in the light of physical forces acting under uniform laws.

\* The Unseen Universe, p. 126.

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“While the sun,” they say, “supplies us with energy, he is himself getting colder, and must ultimately, by radiation into space, part with the life-sustaining power which he now possesses. Besides the inevitable cooling of the sun, we must suppose that, owing to something analogous to etherial friction, the earth and the other planets of our system will be drawn spirally nearer and nearer to the sun, and will at length be engulfed in his mass. In each case there will be, as the result of the collision, the conversion of visible energy into heat, and a partial and temporary restoration of the power of the sun.”

I do not wish to leave the impression that this is an eccentric speculation. On the contrary, it is the accepted doctrine of the scientific evolutionists. For an exact portrayal of the catastrophe John Fiske \* resorts to Biblical language: “The earth, so marvelously wrought to man’s uses, will also be cast aside. The day is to come, no doubt, when the heavens shall vanish as a scroll, and the elements be melted with fervent heat.”

At a later period we may “look for a new heavens and a new earth.” Here I may refer to Herbert Spencer † as a representative teacher of scientific evolution with whose conclusions the entire school agrees: “So far as the data enable us to judge, the integration of our sidereal sys-

\* *The Destiny of Man*, p. 144.

† *First Principles*, chap. XVI.



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tem will be followed by disintegration.” I may cite one more scientific prophecy of these stupendous changes. “There are indications of a time,” writes Fiske,\* “when systems of dead planets shall fall in upon their central ember that was once a sun, and the whole lifeless mass, thus regaining heat, shall expand into a nebulous cloud like that with which we started, that the work of condensation and evolution may begin over again.”

But the process of weaving universes in the loom of evolution by the flight of worlds to and fro will finally cease forever. That period is very far away from us, but it is approaching, and it will surely come.

“Whether,” says Spencer,† “we watch concrete processes, or whether we consider the question in the abstract, we are alike taught that evolution has an impassable limit.” Again, “if évolution of every kind is an increase in complexity of structure and function that is incidental to the universal process of equilibration—if equilibration, passing through the gradually-perfected forms of moving equilibrium, must end in complete rest; what is the fate towards which all things tend? If the bodies constituting our solar system are slowly dissipating the forces they possess—if the sun is losing his heat at a rate which, though insignificant as stated in terms of our chronology, will tell in millions

\* *The Destiny of Man*, p. 113.

† *First Principles*, chap. XVI. *Ibid.*, p. 471.

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of years—if geologic and meteorologic processes cannot but diminish in activity as the sun's radiations diminish—if with the diminution of these radiations there must also go on a diminution in the quantity of vegetal and animal existence—if man and society, however high the degree of evolution at which they arrive, are similarly dependent on this supply of force that is gradually coming to an end—if thus the highest, equally with the lowest, terrestrial life must eventually dwindle and disappear; are we not manifestly progressing towards omnipresent death? And have we thus to contemplate, as the outcome of things, a universe of extinct suns round which circle planets devoid of life? That such a state must be the proximate end of the processes everywhere going on, seems beyond doubt."

Spencer proceeds to ask if possibly another universe of life may be expected to arise from this universe of death, of whose approach he is certain. He inclines to an affirmative answer, but warns his readers that the opinion is a mere speculation. "In dealing with times and spaces and forces so immensely transcending those of which we have any experience, we are in danger of passing the limits of human intelligence." The approach of "omnipresent death" is certain; the return of order and life is doubtful.

This approach of "omnipresent death" is taught by all physicists who consider the subject. Stewart and Tait,\* for example, forecast the future of the universe as follows:

\* The Unseen Universe, p. 196.

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“Supposing that man, in some form, is permitted to remain on the earth for a long series of years, we merely lengthen out the period, but we cannot escape the final catastrophe. The earth will gradually lose its energy of rotation, as well as that of revolution round the sun. The sun himself will wax dim and become useless as a source of energy, until at last the favorable conditions of the present solar system will have quite disappeared. But what happens to our system will happen likewise to the whole visible universe.”

3. The approach of the end of life on the earth will be accompanied by the gradual degradation of the human race, if no supernatural intervention shall take place to prevent it. As the heat of the sun diminishes, vegetable and animal life also will diminish, and the entire globe will become an arctic region, incapable of sustaining civilization. Nor can the time be very distant when the decline will begin. “If,” say Stewart and Tait,\* “we consider the human race, we find that the state of advancement to which they have attained is in many respects greatly due to their physical surroundings. Coal and iron have been as instrumental in promoting knowledge as Galileo and Newton, but our whole stock of these materials will come to an end. By economy it may be possible to lengthen out the period during which they can be supplied,

\* *The Unseen Universe*, p. 196.

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but is it not manifest that we are year by year exhausting them as sources of available energy? Are we not led to conclude that our present state cannot last even for a lengthened period?"

On the whole I do not find that these demonstrations of the scientific evolutionists minister to my hope and comfort. They seem inevitable, unless we assume that in the predictions of the Scriptures we have a promise of divine intervention before the race returns to savagery. The Christian evolutionist inclines to avail himself of the law of evolution so far as it is cheerful, and to part company with it when it leads into these gloomy regions. But this course is neither Christian nor scientific. It is the denial of both faith and reason. He should not ignore these awful pictures wrought by the prophets of the science in which he trusts and accompanied by mathematical proofs from the rigor of which no mind can find a way of escape.

The eschatology which he seeks to deduce from the doctrine of evolution cannot be traced to this parentage. It is distinctly the eschatology of the Spiritualists, and, though ancient, first came into our atmosphere when the early books of Andrew Jackson Davis, "the Poughkeepsie Seer," made their appearance. The

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Spiritualists have always endeavored to connect it with the doctrine of evolution. But the Spiritualists have had no thinkers. The Christian evolutionist should have known better than to affirm an intimate relationship between two doctrines so absolutely hostile to each other.

## CHAPTER XVI

### AFTERTHOUGHTS

Many of my conclusions have been recorded in the preceding pages. Some others, however, remain to be assembled here.

#### I. MOTIVES

It may be said that it is our duty to accept the doctrine of evolution because of the proofs which commend it and without regard to the sacrifices of belief which it requires us to make. The statement may be true, and I do not set myself against it. But it suggests several questions concerning my motives. Is my readiness to accept the doctrine owing to the cogency of the evidences? Or do I depend upon the opinion of others who have little interest in my religious convictions and who deny the evidences upon which I base them? Or am I moved by a nervous fear that I shall be left behind in the wild race for new lands, and shall be reproached for my slowness? Or do I accept the doctrine because I believe it revolutionary? Am I an anarchist in theology, and ready to welcome a

## Afterthoughts

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novelty because it affords a prospect of overturning established beliefs?

### 2. VALUES

If I accept the doctrine, what position shall I give it in the general structure of my faith? Shall I make it the formative doctrine, and adjust all others to it? Or shall I make some older doctrine formative, as that of the word of God, or that of saving faith, or that of the divine decrees, or that of the church? A new truth is like a new piece of furniture; several experiments may be necessary to determine the proper place for it. I may use it to fill some evident vacancy, without disturbing the general order of my house. Or again, it may require me to send the older pieces to the garret or the auction, and to purchase other pieces to match it. But this is usually an unfortunate process, leaving the interior bright with fresh varnish and upholstering, but stiff and staring and hostile to domestic comfort. If I must accept the doctrine of evolution, let me pause before I permit it to banish the truths which have grown most dear to the household of faith.

## The Christian Evolutionist

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### 3. USES

I ought also to ask what use I can make of it when I have brought it into my assemblage of beliefs. Can I preach it? Will it do good? Will it promote the extension of the kingdom of God among men? Will it aid me to lead souls from sin to righteousness? Now I have heard it preached, but never with any moving effect. It did not seem to attract the hearers to God or warn them from disobedience to his law. It did not sound like the glad tidings. But if it cannot be preached with salutary effect, it must not be made formative in our systems of Christian truth. For that which is central and formative must be preached and will be preached.

But if I cannot preach the doctrine of evolution with much hope of winning souls to Christ, perhaps I may at least employ it in solving my doubts and advancing my knowledge of sacred things. But the survey of its influence upon religious thought which I have made in this book does not hold out any great hope of intellectual advantage. It will be difficult for any theologian or philosopher to show just cause why we should reject these words of Royce:



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For the rest, as Professor Le Conte's pupil, who first learned from his lips the meaning of the doctrine of evolution, I must frankly confess that . . . . I have never been able to give to this doctrine, justly central as it is in the world of recent empirical science, the far-reaching, the philosophical, the universal significance which he still attributes to this aspect of reality. Evolution, to me, is not a process in the light of which we can hope to learn much either concerning the Absolute or concerning the relation of the eternal to the temporal world. . . . . Least of all could I hope to find in the consideration of this process the solution of any metaphysical problem so fundamental as are the problems of evil, of freedom, of immortality, or, in general, of the relations of the Absolute to the individual.

Now these are precisely the problems which many theologians have sought to enlighten, but have really darkened and perplexed, by means of the doctrine of evolution. If we must hold the doctrine, would it not be more becoming to hold it in reserve, until we have found out what to do with it?

### 4. A WARM WELCOME

The advocates of the doctrine of evolution are happy because it has been so quickly and so widely accepted, not only by men of science, but also by theologians. They remind us that but a single generation had passed away when "The Descent of Man," so warmly decried at

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first, was as warmly welcomed. They remind us that it is now commended as highly by the theologians as by the biologists. But has not the rush of the theologians been somewhat unseemly? May we not find something to approve in these words of Professor Howison: \*

Since the diffusion of the doctrines of Darwin and Spencer, the more alert portion of the religious world has exhibited a busy haste to readjust its theological conceptions to the new views. In fact, these efforts have been noticeable for their speed and adroitness, rather than for their large and considerate judgment. In their anxiety for harmony with the new, they have not seldom lost sight of the cardinal truths in the old.

### 5. AN APPROACH

There has been an approach of the scientific and the theological evolutionists. Even Spencer has made an apparent concession to the theists. Romanes, beginning with the rejection of theism, ended as a Christian believer. The later works of John Fiske are far more sympathetic towards Christianity than the earlier, and he had planned a book on the development of our religion. Professor Shaler tells us that a similar movement has taken place in his mind. But meanwhile some theologians have fallen back

\*The Conception of God, p. xxii.

## Afterthoughts

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towards the advancing line of the scientific evolutionists, and now occupy a position not easily distinguished from that of mere theism. Many Christians survey this junction of the two armies with glowing anticipations. And indeed, the advance of the men of science may well cause us to rejoice. But ought we to be equally pleased with the recession of Christian thinkers? If it shall proceed much further, it will be found that the men of science will stand nearer to our historic beliefs than the theologians to whom I refer. We shall soon hear the men of science lamenting our retreat and summoning us to stand fast. The two hosts, instead of joining their forces to defend the central fortresses of our faith, will pass each other and wander apart.

THE END.



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